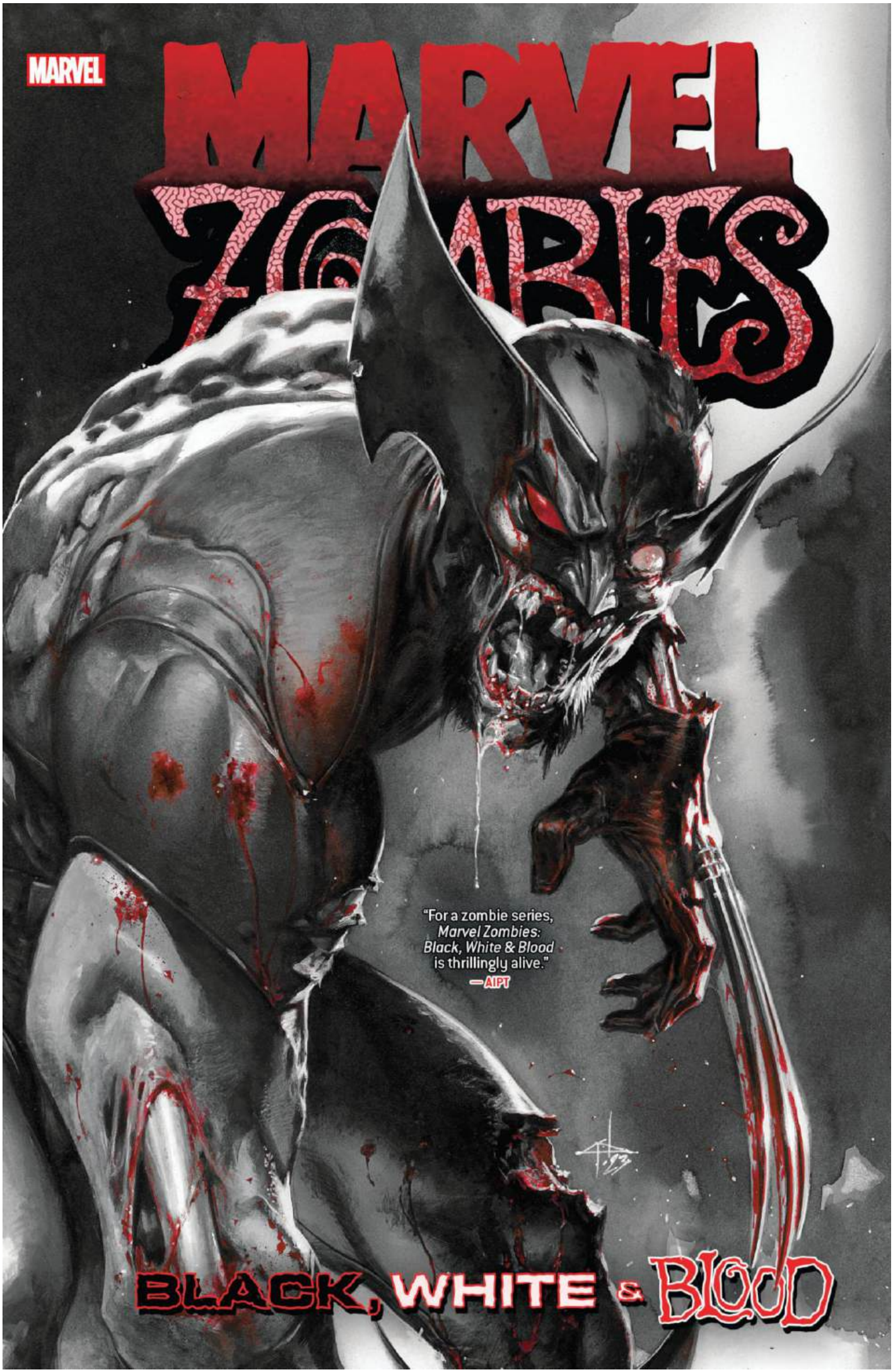
MARVEL
MARVEL ZOMBIES
"For a zombie series, Marvel Zombies: Black, White & Blood is thrillingly alive."
—AIPT
BLACK, WHITE & BLOOD

AN ALL-NEW ERA OF MARVEL ZOMBIES!

Daredevil, Spider-Man, Moon Knight, Blade, the Punisher and many more are beset by ever-growing zombie hordes! A mad Reed Richards works in desperation. A lone warrior stands tall against a galaxy of undead. And the unstoppable X-Force faces its greatest foe yet! From New York City to a mystical forest full of gods and monsters to the now truly Savage Land, the plague has clawed its way everywhere — but in a brutal, bloodstained world, can hope survive? Or will creeping, gnawing, shambling horror win out at last? Find out as your favorite (and soon-to-be favorite!) creators tell the most haunting tales their minds can muster!

COLLECTING *MARVEL ZOMBIES: BLACK, WHITE & BLOOD #1-4* —
BY GARTH ENNIS, ALEX SEGURA, ASHLEY ALLEN, GAIL SIMONE, ERICA SCHULTZ, DOUG WAGNER, PEACH MOMOKO, MAT GROOM, CHERYL LYNN EATON, STEVE SKROCE, STEPHANIE PHILLIPS, MARY SANGIOVANNI, RACHAEL STOTT, JAVI FERNÁNDEZ, JUSTIN MASON, DALE EAGLESHAM, NELSON DANIEL, JUAN GEDEON, ALESSANDRO VITTI, LEANDRO FERNÁNDEZ, DANNY EARLS, STEFANO LANDINI, YEN NITRO, PETE PANTAZIS, MATTIA IACONO, BRIAN REBER AND ESPEN GRUNDETJERN.

MARVEL

PARENTAL ADVISORY! NOT FOR KIDS!

MARVEL
ZOMBIES
BLACK, WHITE & BLOOD

MARVEL ZOMBIES

BLACK, WHITE & BLOOD

#1

"Undefeated"
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ARTIST: Rachael Stott

"Hope"
WRITER: Alex Segura
ARTIST: Javi Fernández

"Deliverance"
WRITER: Ashley Allen
ARTIST: Justin Mason

#2

"Under the Eye of an Unkind Future"
WRITER: Gail Simone
ARTIST: Dale Eaglesham
COLOR ARTIST: Yen Nitro

"The Last Ballad of Beta Ray Bill"
WRITER: Erica Schultz
ARTIST: Nelson Dániel

"Warpath"
WRITER: Doug Wagner
ARTIST: Juan Gedeon
COLOR ARTIST: Dee Cunniffe

#3

"Juju and the Gift of the Insect Bead"
WRITER & ARTIST: Peach Momoko
TRANSLATOR: Zack Davisson
LETTERER: VC's Ariana Maher

"Already Dead"
WRITER: Mat Groom
ARTIST: Alessandro Vitti
COLOR ARTIST: Pete Pantazis

"Surprise, Mother Strucker!"
WRITER: Cheryl Lynn Eaton
ARTIST: Leandro Fernández
COLOR ARTIST: Mattia Iacono

#4

"Strange-Ass Bedfellows"
WRITER & ARTIST: Steve Skroce
COLOR ARTIST: Brian Reber

"Last Man Standing"
WRITER: Stephanie Phillips
ARTIST: Danny Earls

"Shanna of the Dead"
WRITER: Mary SanGiovanni
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ASSISTANT EDITOR: Martin Biro
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#1

DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
YYEEEEEEEEEESSS!

DARE-DEVIL!
DARE-DEVIL!
DARE-DEVIL!
DARE-DEVIL!
LADIES AN' GENTS AN' WHATEVER THE HELL ELSE YOU ARE! THE WINNER!
UNDEFEATED

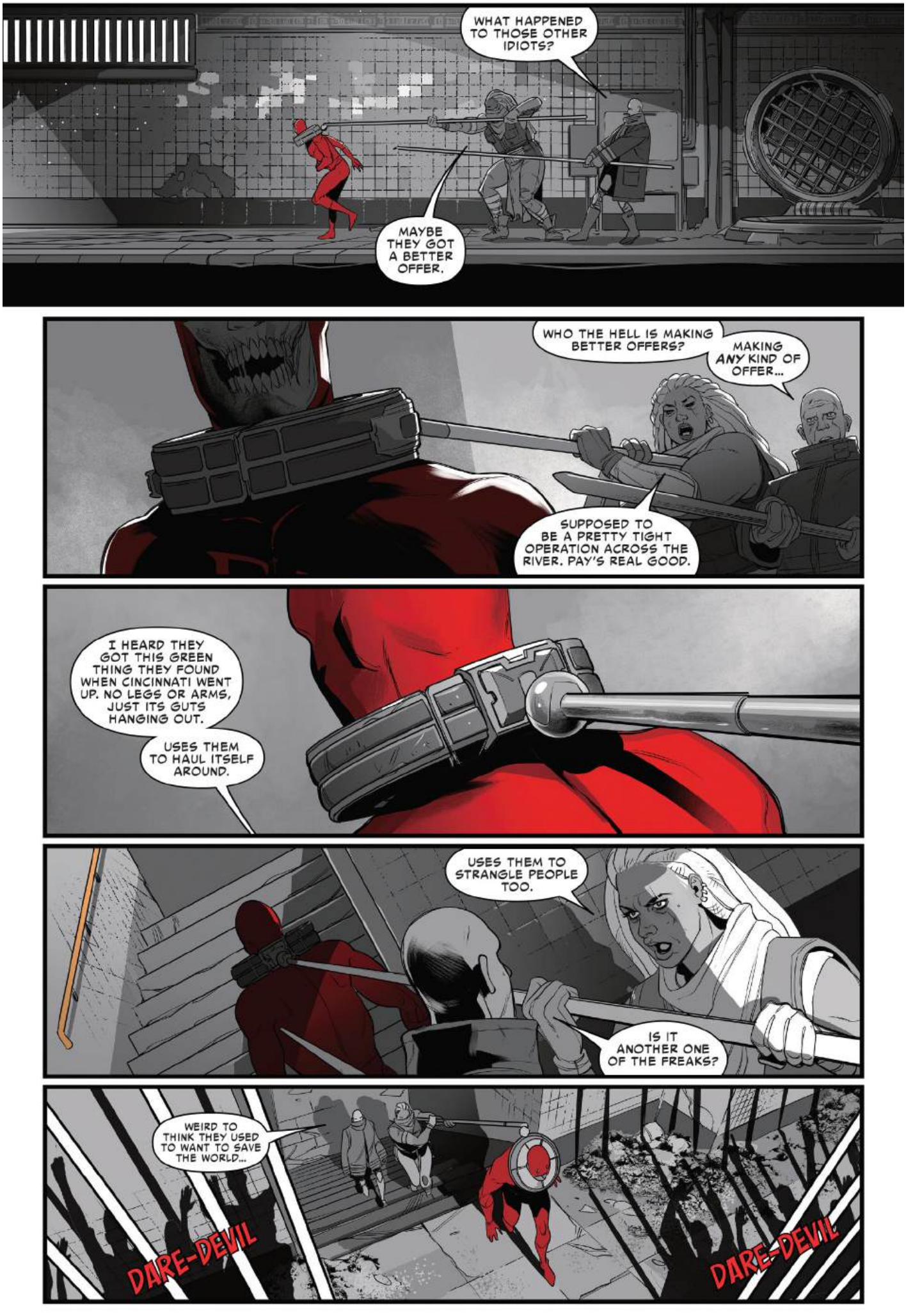
DID YOU EVER DOUBT IT?
COME BACK TOMORROW! BRING FOOD! BRING FURS! BRING ANYTHING YOU GOT TO GAMBLE!
WE'LL HAVE MORE FRESH MEAT FOR THE CHAMP! HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE...!
NEXT UP ON BITE NIGHT-- CHILDREN'S HOUR!
WATCH IT, WATCH IT--!
I'M NOT STUPID.
WHERE'D THEY FIND THIS ONE, ANYWAY?

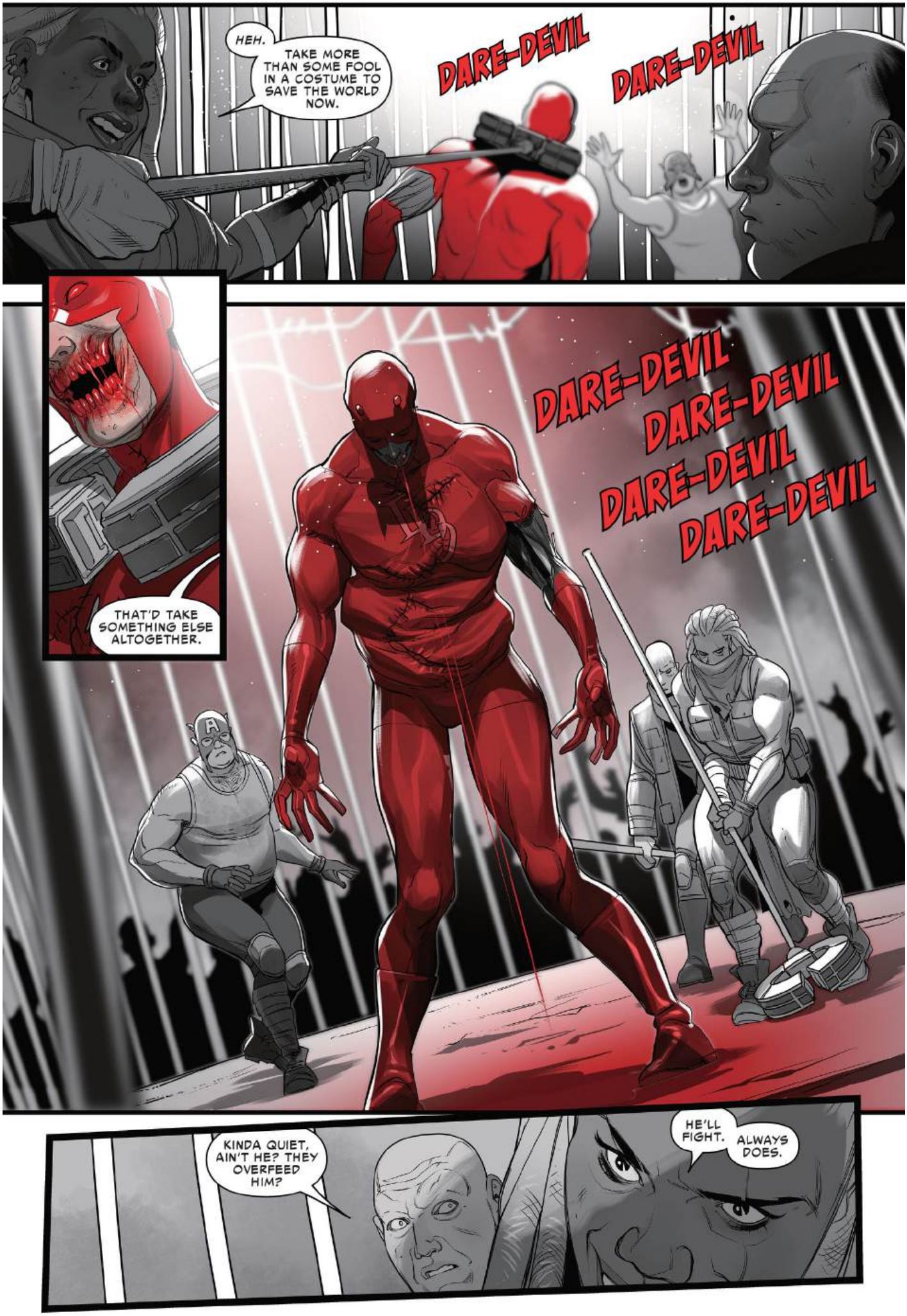
NOT SURE. THINK CAP SAY THE JACKERS BOUGHT HIM OUT EAST.
FAST FOR ONE OF THESE DAMN THINGS. HE WAS A...THE GUYS IN THE SUITS, RIGHT...?
STAND BACK.
OKAY, GET THE LID ON.
THANK YOU

OH MY GOD, THANK YOU
THEY WERE GOING TO KILL ME
DO I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO ME
IF YOU HADN'T
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS
I MEAN THEY WOULD HAVE SUED US OUT OF EXISTENCE
THEY WANTED THE BUILDING, THEY WOULD NEVER HAVE STOPPED
BUT TODAY YOU'VE
THANK YOU
I NEVER LIKED THOSE BOZOS. ALWAYS STICKING THEIR NOSES IN.
LIKE THE COPS WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH.
LIKE THE--

DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
MURDOCK?

IT'S FRANK CASTLE.
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
I HEARD THEY HAD YOU HERE.
I CAN FINISH IT FOR YOU NOW, IF YOU LIKE.
OR I CAN TURN YOU INTO A WALKING BOMB.
AND TOMORROW YOU CAN TAKE THOSE ANIMALS WITH YOU.
UNDERSTAND?


WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE OTHER IDIOTS?
MAYBE THEY GOT A BETTER OFFER.
WHO THE HELL IS MAKING BETTER OFFERS?
MAKING ANY KIND OF OFFER...
SUPPOSED TO BE A PRETTY TIGHT OPERATION ACROSS THE RIVER. PAY'S REAL GOOD.
I HEARD THEY GOT THIS GREEN THING THEY FOUND WHEN CINCINNATI WENT UP. NO LEGS OR ARMS, JUST ITS GUTS HANGING OUT.
USES THEM TO HAUL ITSELF AROUND.
USES THEM TO STRANGLE PEOPLE TOO.
IS IT ANOTHER ONE OF THE FREAKS?
WEIRD TO THINK THEY USED TO WANT TO SAVE THE WORLD...
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL


HEH.
TAKE MORE THAN SOME FOOL IN A COSTUME TO SAVE THE WORLD NOW.
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
THAT'D TAKE SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER.
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
DARE-DEVIL
KINDA QUIET, AIN'T HE? THEY OVERFEED HIM?
HE'LL FIGHT. ALWAYS DOES.

AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!
THE END.

I DON'T BELIEVE IN NO-WIN SCENARIOS.
IT'S THE NEW YORKER IN ME. LEARNED IT FROM MY AUNT MAY.
DAILY BUGLE
DON'T GIVE UP, SHE'D SAY. THERE'S ALWAYS HOPE.
DAILY BUGLE
I'VE FELT THIS IN THE DARKEST, BLEAKEST SITUATIONS.
I'VE BATTLED POWER-MAD DEMIGODS. MANIACAL GOBLINS. THE DEVIL HIMSELF.
BUT EVEN IN THE FACE OF UNSPEAKABLE ODDS, HOPE REMAINED.
DAILY

KRSSHH
DAILY
BECAUSE IF WE DON'T HAVE HOPE--WHAT'S LEFT?

I'M HAVING A REAL HARD TIME HANGING ON TO THAT RIGHT NOW.
HUFF *HUFF* JUST KEEP EVERYONE BACK, OKAY? I'LL HOLD THEM OFF.
HOLD THEM OFF? YOU CALL THIS "HOLDING THEM OFF"?
--CITY IS COMPLETELY OVERRUN BY THESE MONSTERS...
...PANDEMONIUM IS THE WORD, BILL, AND I SHUDDER TO THINK...
DAILY BUGLE
GRAAAHHHH!
NGGHHH...!
NEVER CHANGE, JONAH.
EVEN WITH MY MASK ON, THE STENCH OF DEATH IS OVERPOWERING.
I KEEP WAITING FOR IT. FOR THAT GLIMMER OF HOPE.
CHROOHM
INSTEAD, I SEE MORE OF THEM.
THEY JUST KEEP COMING.

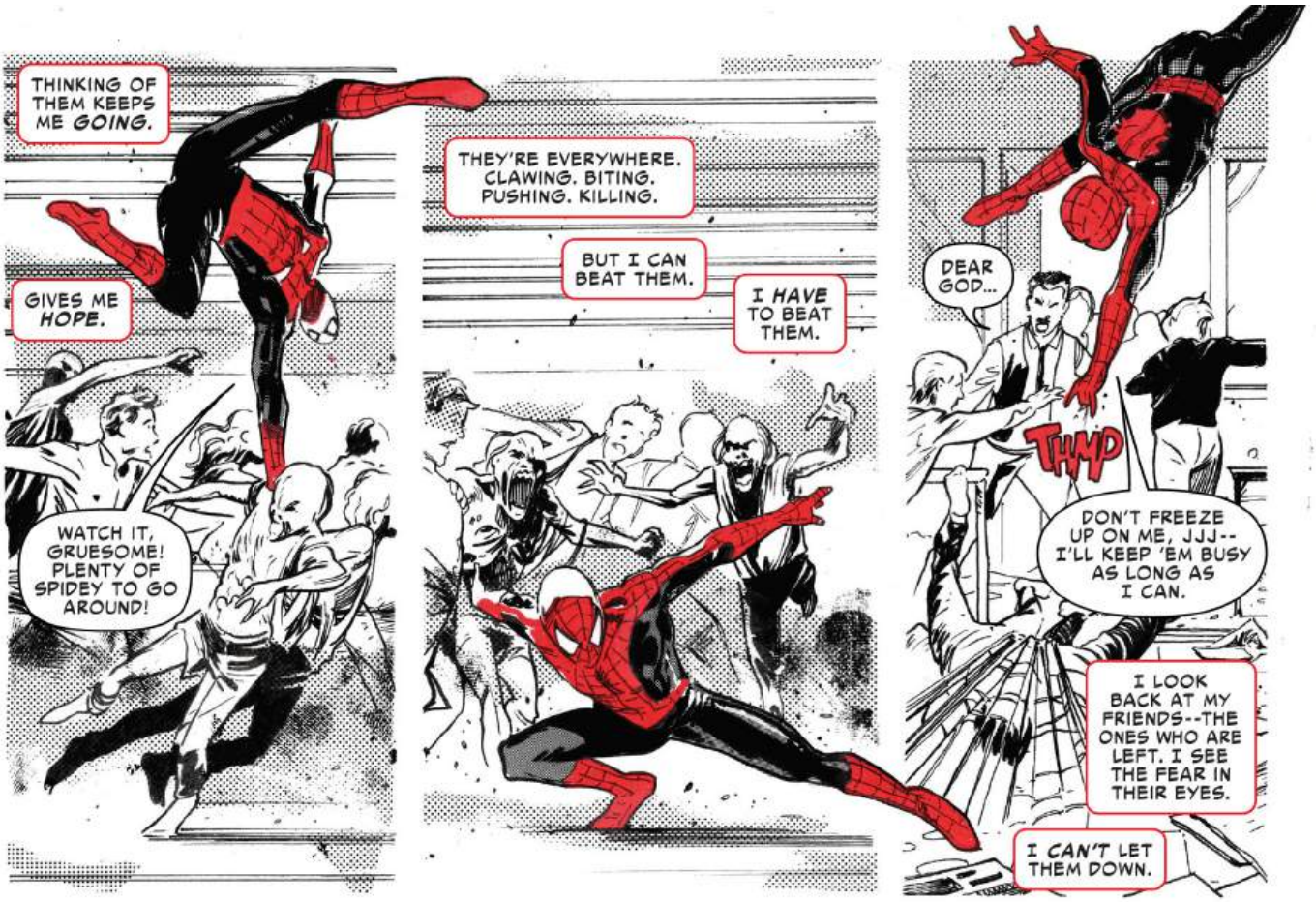
JUST HOLD YOUR GROUND, ALL RIGHT? WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS.
JONAH'S PANICKED VOICE SENDS A CHILL THROUGH ME.
I'M SPENT. RUNNING ON INSTINCT.
BUT I'M THEIR ONLY CHANCE.

I THINK ABOUT AUNT MAY. MARY JANE.
I PRAY THEY'RE OKAY--THAT THEY'VE SOMEHOW GOTTEN TO SAFETY.
NO... NO...
B-BETTY? BETTY BRANT?
BETTY BRANT WAS JONAH'S SECRETARY.

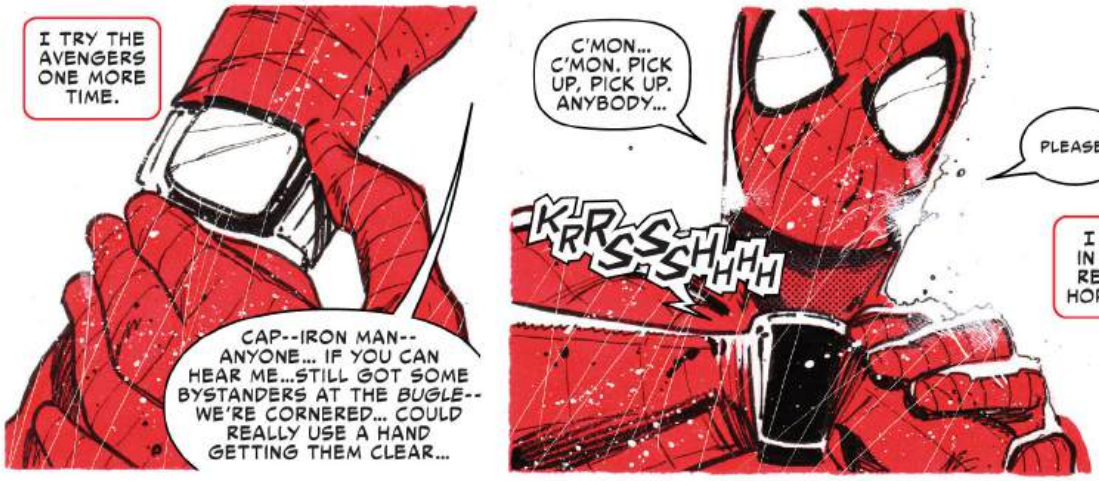
MORE IMPORTANTLY, SHE WAS THE FIRST GIRL I LOVED.
BETTY... NO...OH GOD...
GRAAHHH!

ROBBIE? YOU TOO? NO--
AIIIEEERRGH!
SKRSH
ROBBIE ROBERTSON WAS THE FIRST PERSON WHO BELIEVED IN ME AT THE BUGLE. A TRUE FRIEND.

BUT IT'S NOT THEM. THEY'RE DEAD. REPLACED BY THESE HORRIBLE THINGS. MONSTERS.
FLOOSH
AUNT MAY. MARY JANE. PLEASE BE OKAY. PLEASE.


THINKING OF THEM KEEPS ME GOING.
GIVES ME HOPE.
WATCH IT, GRUESOME! PLENTY OF SPIDEY TO GO AROUND!
THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. CLAWING. BITING. PUSHING. KILLING.
BUT I CAN BEAT THEM.
I HAVE TO BEAT THEM.
DEAR GOD...
THUMP
DON'T FREEZE UP ON ME, JJJ-- I'LL KEEP 'EM BUSY AS LONG AS I CAN.
I LOOK BACK AT MY FRIENDS--THE ONES WHO ARE LEFT. I SEE THE FEAR IN THEIR EYES.
I CAN'T LET THEM DOWN.

JONAH FLIPS THE FIRE ALARM. DISTRACTS THEM FOR A SECOND--AND I FEEL IT AGAIN.
HOPE.


I TRY THE AVENGERS ONE MORE TIME.
CAP--IRON MAN-- ANYONE... IF YOU CAN HEAR ME...STILL GOT SOME BYSTANDERS AT THE BUGLE-- WE'RE CORNERED... COULD REALLY USE A HAND GETTING THEM CLEAR...
C'MON... C'MON. PICK UP, PICK UP. ANYBODY...
KRRSSSHHHH
PLEASE.
I GET STATIC IN RESPONSE. A REMINDER THAT HOPE IS FLEETING.
AND MIGHT BE GONE.

JUST BARRICADE THE DOOR AND OPEN THE WINDOWS--I--UH--I CALLED THE AVENGERS.
THE FIRE ALARM WILL ONLY BUY US A FEW SECONDS.
I DON'T TELL JONAH THAT THE AVENGERS ARE AWOL. I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO.
GET INSIDE, JONAH. GET YOUR PEOPLE TO SAFETY.
WAIT, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
HIS CONCERN TELLS ME HOW DIRE THINGS ARE.
I ALMOST CHUCKLE AT THE FAKE HEADLINE IN MY HEAD. "BUGLE PUBLISHER BRIEFLY CARES FOR WEBBED MENACE."
--READ YOU, SPIDER-MAN--ON OUR WAY--KRRKKK--THINGS ARE PRETTY DICEY RIGHT NOW--
I FEEL THE TEARS WELL UP IN MY EYES BEFORE HAWKEYE FINISHES TALKING.
TELL YOUR PEOPLE TO--KRRSSSHHH--TIGHT AND HANG ON...
I LET MYSELF FEEL HOPEFUL--
--BUT THEN MY SPIDER-SENSE GOES OFF.
I REACT ON INSTINCT--HITTING WHATEVER'S BEHIND ME.
THWACK
UUGGHH!
THE KICK TAKES A LOT OUT OF ME.
ACHE ALL OVER. EYES BLUR. BLOOD IN MY MOUTH.
I FEEL SOMETHING MOVING BEHIND ME, BUT MY SENSES ARE DULL AND SLUGGISH--

WHUMP
CAN BARELY TURN MY HEAD TO SEE...SEE WHAT HIT ME.
WHO HIT ME.
I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT AT FIRST.
MAY...AUNT MAY?
NO...NOT MAY. IT CAN'T BE.
WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S PETER?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY NEPHEW?
NO... PLEASE, NO...
AND IN THAT MOMENT, I LOSE ALL HOPE. I FEEL A PART OF ME DIE.

THIS IS WRONG. IT HAS TO BE A MIRAGE.
A TRICK OF SOME KIND.
NORMAN. OR HARRY. THE JACKAL.
HUUKKKK.
SOMEONE FOUND OUT MY IDENTITY, AND THEY'VE CREATED AN ANDROID OR CLONE--
BUT IT IS HER.
I KNOW IT IN MY HEART.
HER PERFUME--I CAN STILL SMELL IT, THROUGH THE STINK OF DEATH AND DECAY.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO MY PETER?!
AND THAT BLOUSE. SHE'D BOUGHT IT FOR HERSELF A FEW DAYS AGO, AFTER MONTHS OF SAVING. SHE'D BEEN SO HAPPY.
KRAKOOM
ARGGHHH!
I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE DANGEROUS...THAT YOU'D HURT...MY NEPHEW...
THWIP
HE'S SUCH A FRAIL...
...NICE...
THWIP
...BOY.

I CAN'T.
I CAN'T DO IT.
I CAN'T FIGHT BACK.
NOT *HER.*
PLEASE... NO...STOP... MAY...
AUNT MAY *RAISED* ME. WITH UNCLE BEN AT FIRST, THEN ALONE.
I COOKED YOUR FAVORITE BREAKFAST, PETER!
SHE GAVE ME *EVERYTHING* SHE COULD.
EVERY MINUTE. EVERY DIME.
I SAW THE OVERDUE BILLS, AUNT MAY--WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?
YOU'LL DO NOTHING, YOUNG MAN! LET ME WORRY ABOUT THE MONEY. YOU WORRY ABOUT YOUR STUDIES!
SHE'S A GOOD WOMAN. *THE BEST.*
RGRAAAHH!
CRUNCH
CRUNCH

I'M SORRY, AUNT MAY.
TELL ME NOW...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY PETER?
PETER...? YOU WANT PETER?
I'M RIGHT HERE, AUNT MAY. IT'S ME...PETER.
PETER?
OH... PETER...IT'S YOU...
WHAT... WHERE AM I?
AUNT MAY? CAN YOU HEAR ME? ARE YOU IN THERE?
OH DEAR... WHAT HAVE I BECOME...? A MONSTER?
PLEASE, PETER...
PLEASE KILL ME.

I KEEP TELLING MYSELF--
--"IT'S NOT HER."
GRUUGGHHH!
I REPEAT IT, OVER AND OVER, LIKE A MANTRA.
IT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN DO IT.
ANY HOPE I'D STOWED AWAY TURNS TO SMOKE.
I LOOK AT MY WOUNDED ARM AND UNDERSTAND MY STORY IS OVER.
EVEN IF MY HEART CAN'T ACCEPT IT.
NO... NOT LIKE THIS...
DAMNED FOOL-- GONNA GET HIMSELF KILLED OUT THERE.
JONAH, NO--LET HIM GO!
C'MON, YOU WEBBED MENACE-- GET IN HERE. YOU DON'T NEED TO PRETEND TO BE A HERO ANYMORE--
...JONAH... JONAH... PLEASE...
...RUN...
...RUN FOR YOUR LIFE!
THE END.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
328 DAYS AFTER THE ZOMBIE OUTBREAK.
THE LAST OF THE SURVIVORS SHOULD REACH ZONE C BY MORNING.
GOOD. WE CAN THEN BE DONE WITH THIS CITY.
WE HAVE TO HELP THESE PEOPLE, KHONSHU.
AND I SAY WE HAVEN'T STAYED LONG ENOUGH.
WE HAVE TO HELP ALL TRAVELERS OF THE NIGHT. WE'VE STAYED TOO LONG.
YOU STILL DO NOT TRUST ME.
OF COURSE I DON'T.
WHEN HAVE YOU EVER HAD MY BEST INTERESTS IN MIND?
MY SON--
MARC.
NO. YOU PROMISED YOU WOULD HELP ME FIX THIS--
WE ARE NOT ALONE.

GROWL
SNARL
MARC.
I'M BUSY HERE.
REALLY? WHAT GAVE IT AWAY?
SOMETHING IS OFF.
TWO DOWN.
ONE TO GO?
ZAP

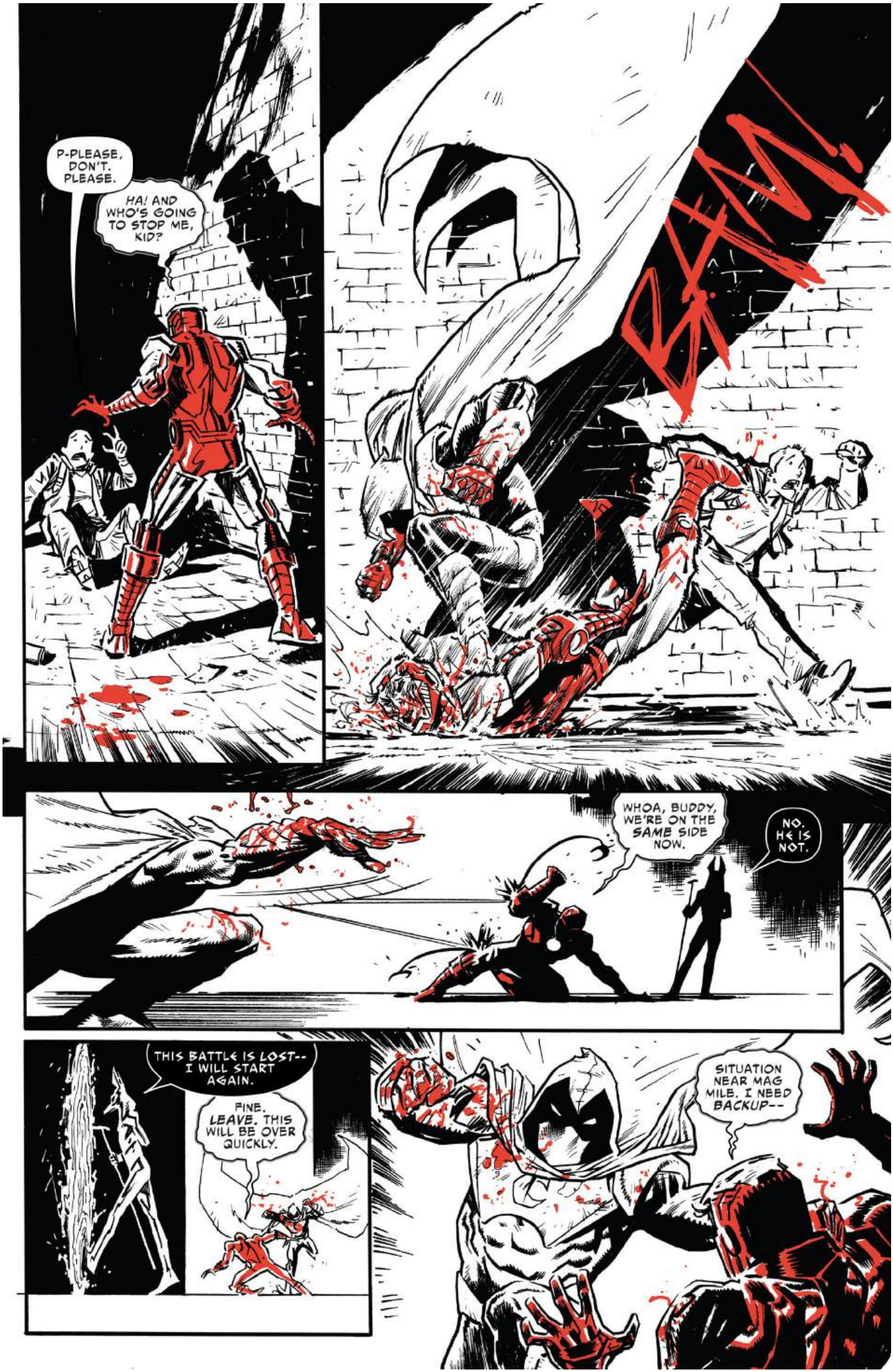
YOU ARE A *HARD* MAN TO FIND, MOON KNIGHT.
YOU NOT SO MUCH, KHONSHU.
SINCE WHEN CAN *IRON MAN* SEE THE GODS? WHO HAVE YOU GOTTEN MIXED UP WITH, STARK?
HELLO, KHONSHU.
LOVELY NIGHT FOR THE END OF THE WORLD, ISN'T IT?

ANUBIS. CEASE THIS AT ONCE. OSIRIS WILL--
THE TIME OF MY FATHER HAS ENDED. MY REIGN HAS COME.
NO SOUL WILL CROSS TO HIS AFTERLIFE. I WILL NOT BE HIS TOOL ANY LONGER.
THIS VIRUS IS A GIFT. YOU WILL SEE THAT, KHONSHU.
BUT FIRST, I NEEDED A WAY TO PREVENT YOU AND YOUR VESSEL FROM INTERFERING.
FORTUNATELY, I FOUND AN UNDEAD HOST MORE THAN WILLING.
GRAB
ARGH!
AW, DOES THAT HURT?
SIZZ

END THIS NOW, MARC.
WORKING ON IT.
ARGH!
RIP
THAT HURT.
JUST FOR THAT LITTLE STUNT, I'LL MAKE SURE TO GIVE MY THANKS TO THE GROUP BELOW.

HEY, ANUBIS.
THEY DON'T NEED ALL THEIR LIMBS TO BE ZOMBIES, RIGHT?
AS LONG AS THE VIRUS SPREADS, I GET A FREE PASS TO DO ANYTHING I WANT.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU.
AAAAAH!
-WHEEZE-
-CHOKE-
NO... NO...
WOULD YOU LIKE MY HELP NOW?

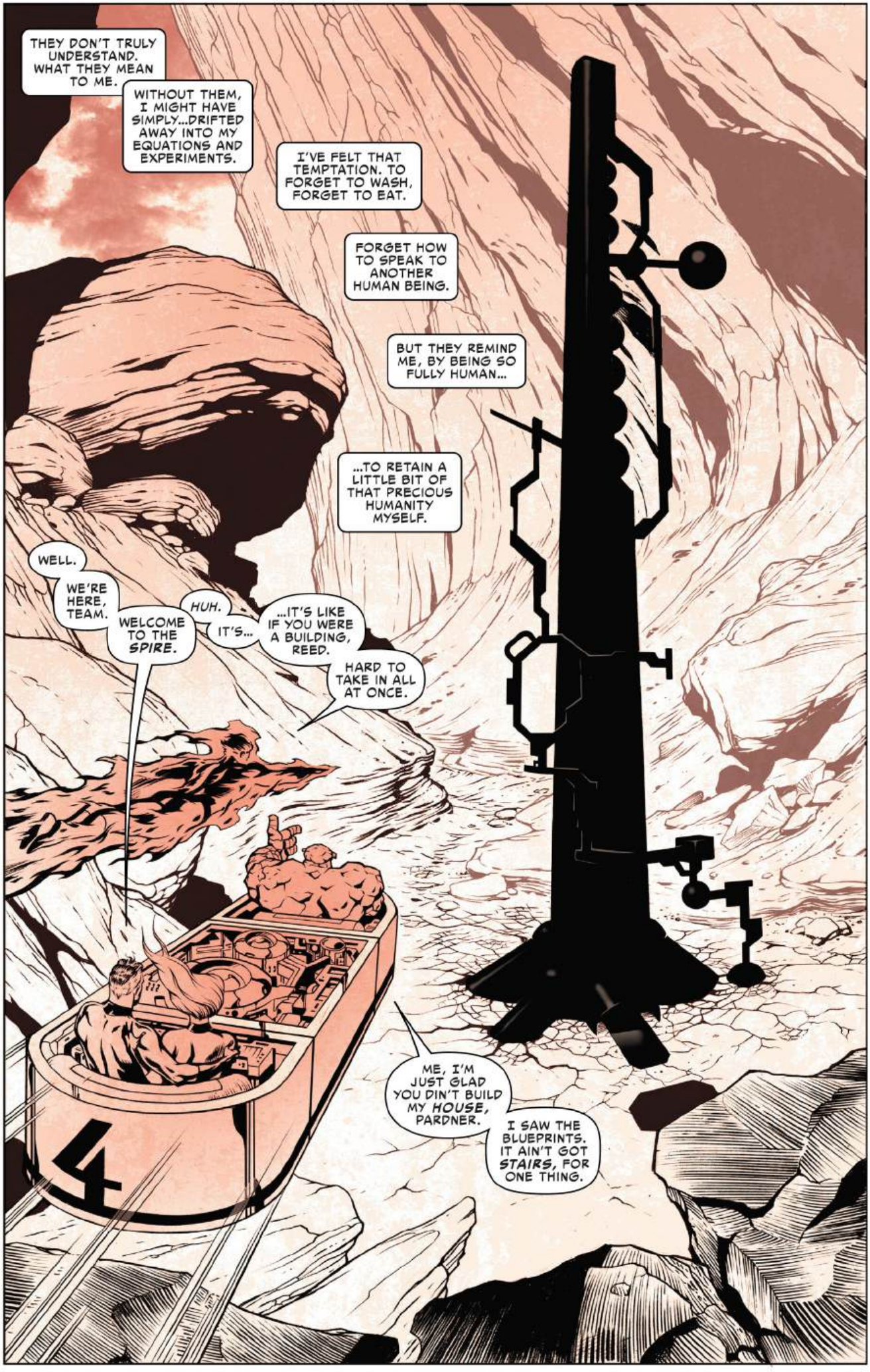
HUFF-
HUFF-
GET UP, MARC.
THE VIRUS IS SPREADING. I CAN'T THINK STRAIGHT.
I'M GOING TO DIE--
THEY'RE GOING TO DIE.
WHEN HAVE YOU EVER NEEDED YOUR MIND, MY SON?
FAITH HAS NEVER NEEDED RATIONALITY.
TRUST IN MY GUIDANCE.


P-PLEASE, DON'T. PLEASE.
HA! AND WHO'S GOING TO STOP ME, KID?
BAM!
WHOA, BUDDY, WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE NOW.
NO. HE IS NOT.
THIS BATTLE IS LOST-- I WILL START AGAIN.
FINE. LEAVE. THIS WILL BE OVER QUICKLY.
SITUATION NEAR MAG MILE. I NEED BACKUP--

CRACK
MY SON.
MY VESSEL.
YOU'VE LISTENED WELL.
HMM.
YOU MUST BE HUNGRY. DO NOT WORRY.
WHO AM I TO DENY MY AVATAR?
CHOMP

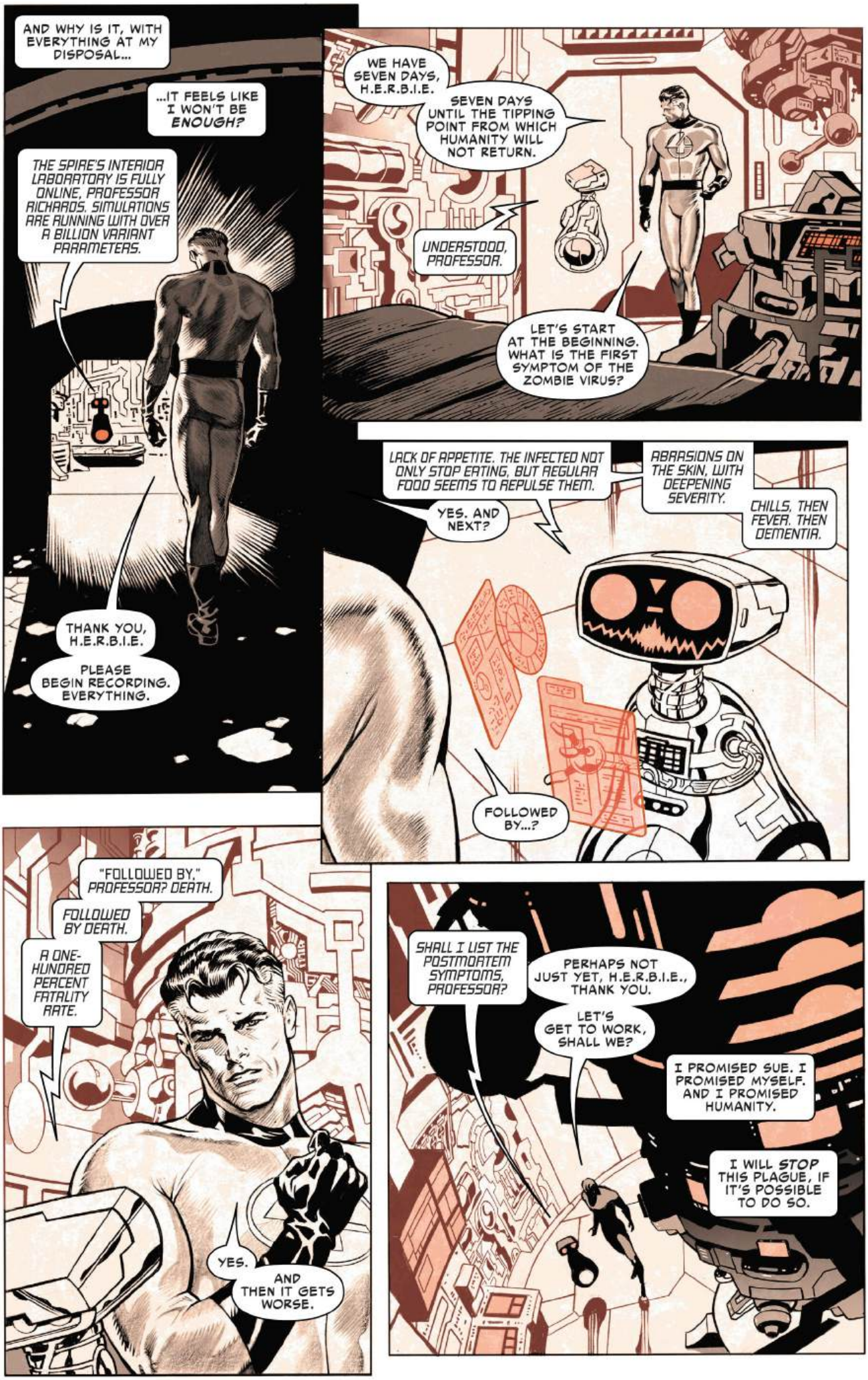
WE WILL SOON RUN OUT OF YOUR FORMER ALLIES TO CONSUME. BUT I CAN INDULGE YOU FOR NOW.
I AM A MERCIFUL FATHER.
BUT YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME.
CAN YOU DO THAT, MY SON?
OF COURSE, FATHER.
I WILL SOON REBUILD YOU IN MY IMAGE, BUT FOR NOW--
--FINISH THIS.
END.

#2
ELEKTRA

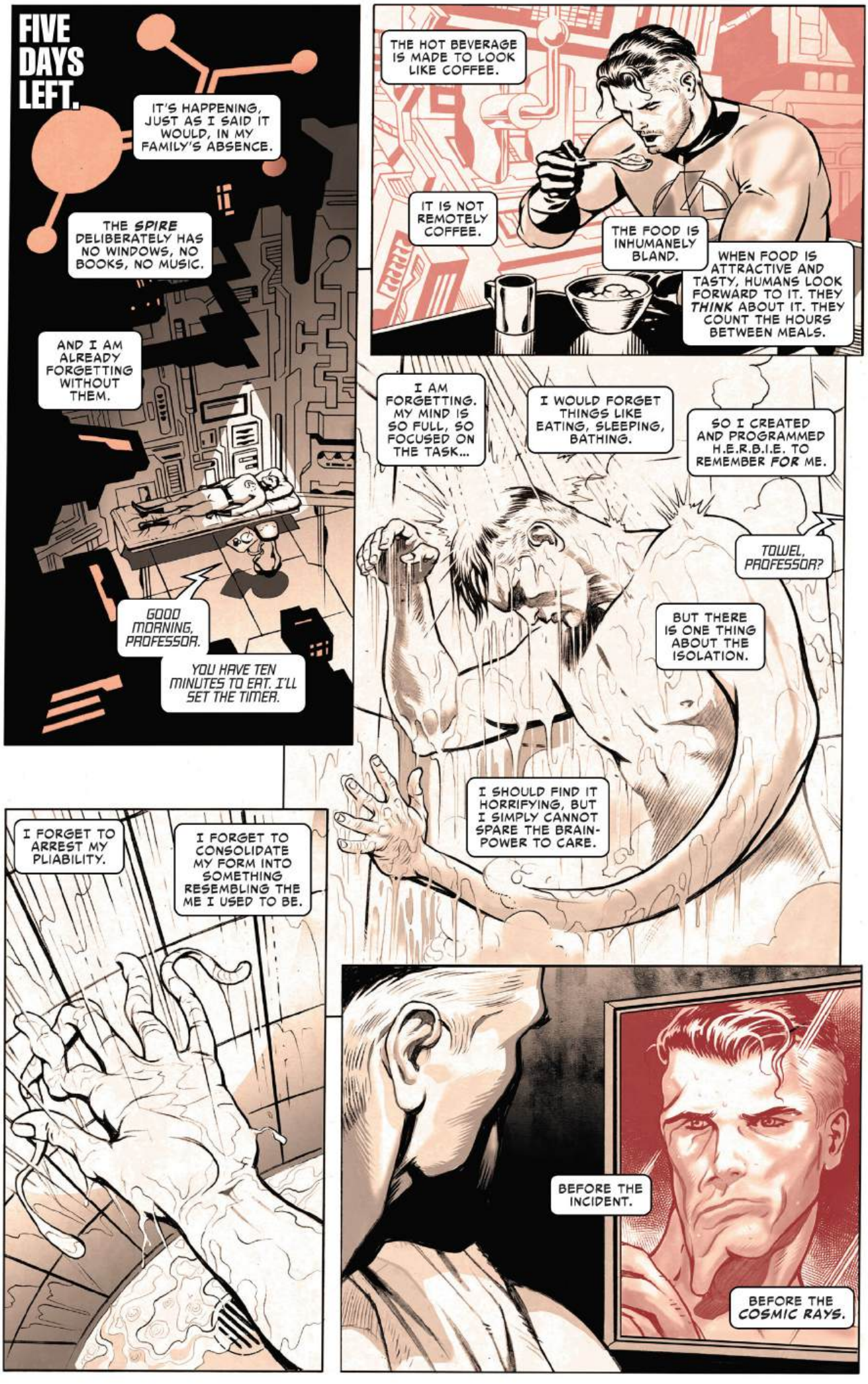

THEY DON'T TRULY UNDERSTAND. WHAT THEY MEAN TO ME.
WITHOUT THEM, I MIGHT HAVE SIMPLY...DRIFTED AWAY INTO MY EQUATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS.
I'VE FELT THAT TEMPTATION. TO FORGET TO WASH, FORGET TO EAT.
FORGET HOW TO SPEAK TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.
BUT THEY REMIND ME, BY BEING SO FULLY HUMAN...
...TO RETAIN A LITTLE BIT OF THAT PRECIOUS HUMANITY MYSELF.
WELL.
WE'RE HERE, TEAM.
WELCOME TO THE SPIRE.
HUH.
IT'S...
...IT'S LIKE IF YOU WERE A BUILDING, REED.
HARD TO TAKE IN ALL AT ONCE.
ME, I'M JUST GLAD YOU DIN'T BUILD MY HOUSE, PARDNER.
I SAW THE BLUEPRINTS. IT AIN'T GOT STAIRS, FOR ONE THING.

THAT'S THE POINT, ACTUALLY, BEN. PAINFUL AS IT MAY BE.
OH. RIGHT.
I FERGOT.
THIS IS REALLY IT, ISN'T IT?
THE LAST RIDE OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
...
I HOPE NOT, JOHNNY.
REED. DON'T DO THIS. DON'T PUSH US AWAY.
LET US HELP. LET US DO WHAT WE ALWAYS DO.
LET US BE YOUR IMAGINAUTS.
I CAN'T, SUE.
MY CALCULATIONS SAY WE HAVE SEVEN DAYS TO STOP THIS...THIS ZOMBIE PLAGUE.
I'VE NEVER WANTED MORE TO STAY WITH YOU.
BUT THE WORLD HAS A LITERAL DEADLINE.
WE GET IT, PAL.
FAMILY OR NO, THE SURVIVAL OF EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON YOU NOT HAVIN' NO DISTRACTIONS.
NOT EVEN US.
YES. I'M SORRY.

GONNA FEEL WEIRD NOT BEIN' YER CO-PILOT, STRETCH.
BEN.
I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF FRIENDS.
BUT I DIDN'T TRULY NEED THAT MANY.
BECAUSE I HAD THE BEST ONE.
IF YOU NEED US, REED. FOR ANYTHING.
JOHNNY.
I HAVEN'T SAID THIS, I KNOW.
BUT I'M SO DAMN PROUD OF THE MAN YOU HAVE GROWN UP TO BE.
SWEETHEART.
MAKE THIS SACRIFICE WORTH SOMETHING. WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME, PLEASE?
I'LL TRY, DARLING. I VOW IT.
OKAY. OKAY, GOOD. AND IF YOU CAN'T, IF YOU CAN'T STOP THE VIRUS AND YOU'RE CERTAIN...
"...THEN YOU COME HOME. TO SPEND THE END WITH THE PEOPLE WHO NEED YOU."
AND THEN, THEY ARE GONE.
THAT'S THE PROBLEM, SUE, MY FRIEND, MY WIFE.
RIGHT NOW, THE WHOLE WORLD NEEDS ME.


AND WHY IS IT, WITH EVERYTHING AT MY DISPOSAL...
...IT FEELS LIKE I WON'T BE ENOUGH?
THE SPIRE'S INTERIOR LABORATORY IS FULLY ONLINE, PROFESSOR RICHARDS. SIMULATIONS ARE RUNNING WITH OVER A BILLION VARIANT PARAMETERS.
THANK YOU, H.E.R.B.I.E.
PLEASE BEGIN RECORDING. EVERYTHING.
WE HAVE SEVEN DAYS, H.E.R.B.I.E.
SEVEN DAYS UNTIL THE TIPPING POINT FROM WHICH HUMANITY WILL NOT RETURN.
UNDERSTOOD, PROFESSOR.
LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING. WHAT IS THE FIRST SYMPTOM OF THE ZOMBIE VIRUS?
LACK OF APPETITE. THE INFECTED NOT ONLY STOP EATING, BUT REGULAR FOOD SEEMS TO REPULSE THEM.
YES. AND NEXT?
ABRASIONS ON THE SKIN, WITH DEEPENING SEVERITY.
CHILLS, THEN FEVER. THEN DEMENTIA.
FOLLOWED BY...?
"FOLLOWED BY," PROFESSOR? DEATH.
FOLLOWED BY DEATH.
A ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT FATALITY RATE.
YES. AND THEN IT GETS WORSE.
SHALL I LIST THE POSTMORTEM SYMPTOMS, PROFESSOR?
PERHAPS NOT JUST YET, H.E.R.B.I.E., THANK YOU.
LET'S GET TO WORK, SHALL WE?
I PROMISED SUE. I PROMISED MYSELF. AND I PROMISED HUMANITY.
I WILL STOP THIS PLAGUE, IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO DO SO.

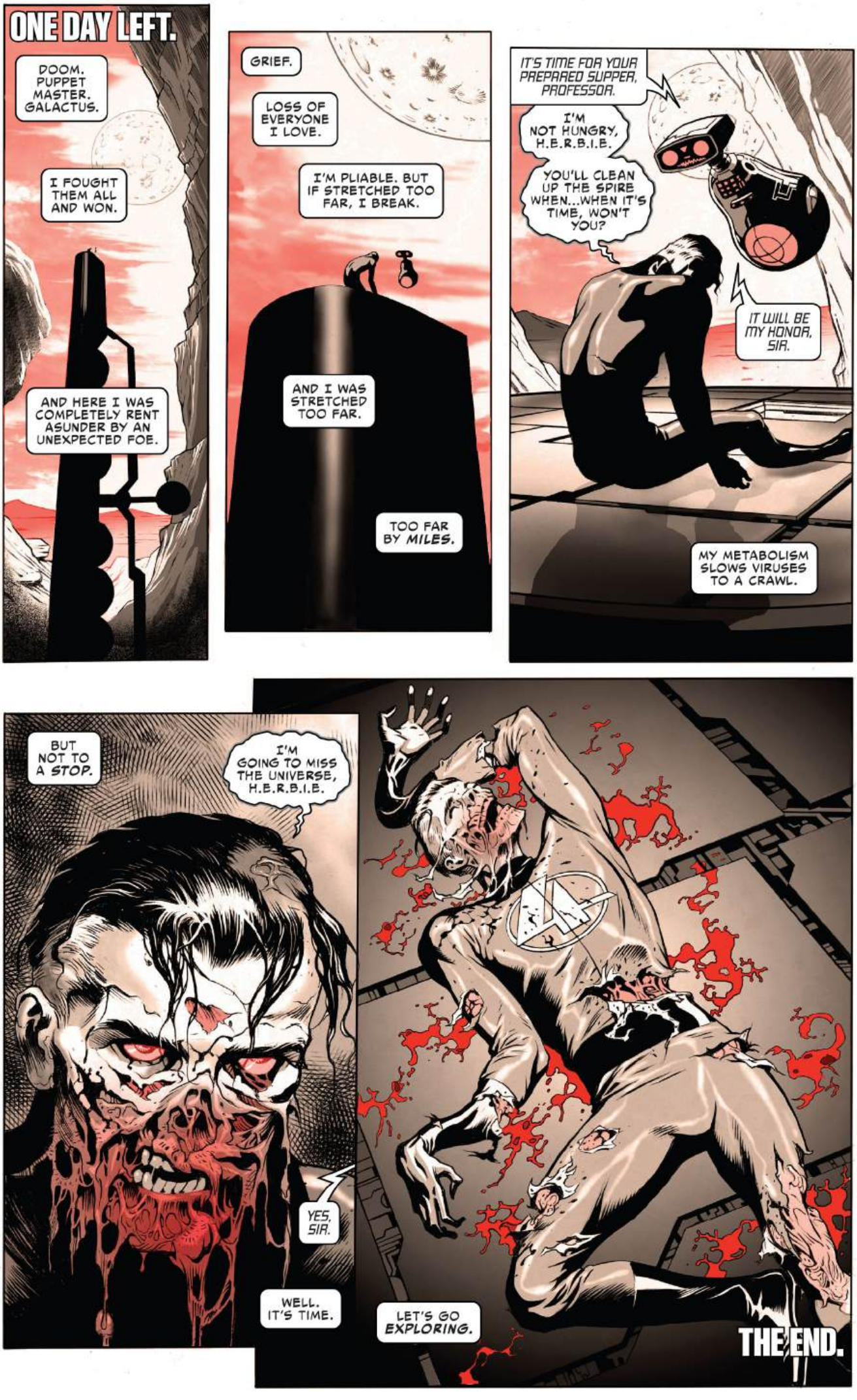
SIX DAYS LEFT.
IF WE SURVIVE THIS, AS A PEOPLE...HISTORY WILL ASK:
"WHY DIDN'T REED RICHARDS BRING OTHER BRILLIANT MINDS TO COME ASSIST IN THE EFFORT? TONY STARK, LUNELLA LAFAYETTE, EVEN VICTOR VON DOOM."
IT WON'T BE UNDERSTOOD IN MY LIFETIME.
REED, I'M... I'M SO SORRY TO BOTHER YOU AT THIS TIME.
I HAVE LITERALLY TWO MINUTES A DAY SCHEDULED FOR COORDINATION WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD, ANTHONY.
IT'S BECAUSE IT WOULD ONLY SLOW ME DOWN.
THIS CONVERSATION MEANS I DON'T SPEAK TO MY CHILDREN TODAY. PLEASE GET TO THE POINT, IF YOU WOULD.
OKAY. I UNDERSTAND, REED. MAYBE MORE THAN ANYONE.
SO, QUICK UPDATE.
REMEMBER, WE HAD SOME GALLOWS HUMOR THAT THE LAST HUMAN BEING ON EARTH WOULD BE THE MOLE MAN?
"WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LAUGHED. HE AND HIS ENTIRE COLONY OF MOLOIDS WERE WIPED OUT.
"ONE INFECTED GOT THROUGH THEIR DEFENSES. ONE."
POOR HARVEY ELDER.
ALL HE WANTED WAS TO BE--
--ACCEPTED?
CARED ABOUT, I THINK. HE WANTED PEOPLE TO CARE.
I THINK IT'S LIKELY YOU MIGHT BE THE LAST OF US, TONY. YOUR ENTIRE POWER SET IS A HERMETICALLY SEALED ENVIRONMENT.
YEAH. WE TRIED RUSH-PRODUCING SUITS FOR THE NORMIES.
THEY WON'T WEAR THEM. THEY'RE AFRAID OF THEM.
REED, LISTEN. ABOUT WHAT THE SUPER-SKRULL DID--
I AM NOT DISCUSSING THAT, STARK.
PLEASE DON'T CALL AGAIN.
PLEASANTRIES AND GOSSIP.
WE HAVE EIGHT THOUSAND MINUTES LEFT AND HE WASTES TWO OF THEM WITH CHATTER.
I THOUGHT HE'D UNDERSTOOD.

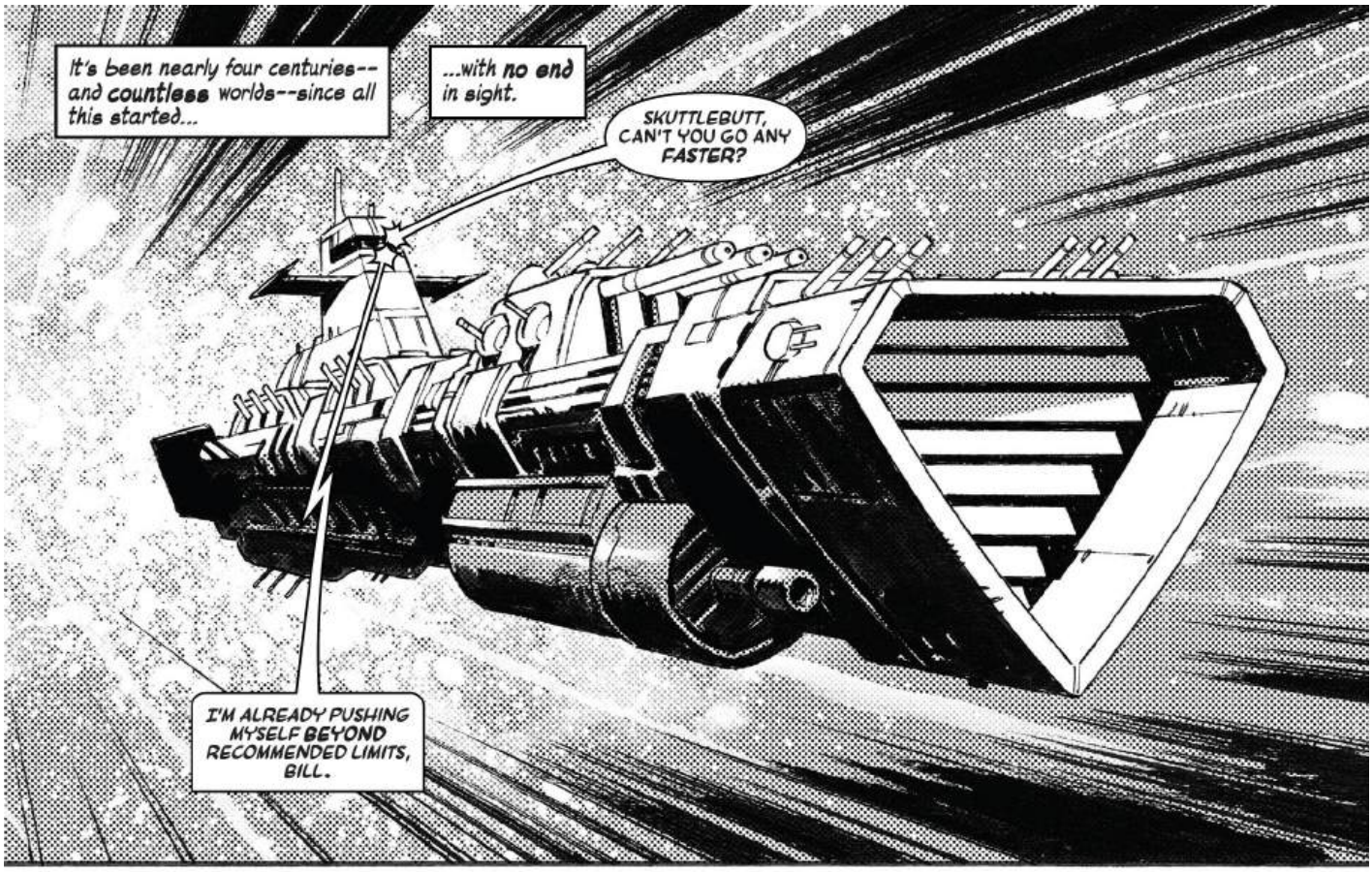

FIVE DAYS LEFT.
IT'S HAPPENING, JUST AS I SAID IT WOULD, IN MY FAMILY'S ABSENCE.
THE SPIRE DELIBERATELY HAS NO WINDOWS, NO BOOKS, NO MUSIC.
AND I AM ALREADY FORGETTING WITHOUT THEM.
GOOD MORNING, PROFESSOR.
YOU HAVE TEN MINUTES TO EAT. I'LL SET THE TIMER.
THE HOT BEVERAGE IS MADE TO LOOK LIKE COFFEE.
IT IS NOT REMOTELY COFFEE.
THE FOOD IS INHUMANELY BLAND.
WHEN FOOD IS ATTRACTIVE AND TASTY, HUMANS LOOK FORWARD TO IT. THEY THINK ABOUT IT. THEY COUNT THE HOURS BETWEEN MEALS.
I AM FORGETTING. MY MIND IS SO FULL, SO FOCUSED ON THE TASK...
I WOULD FORGET THINGS LIKE EATING, SLEEPING, BATHING.
SO I CREATED AND PROGRAMMED H.E.R.B.I.E. TO REMEMBER FOR ME.
TOWEL, PROFESSOR?
BUT THERE IS ONE THING ABOUT THE ISOLATION.
I SHOULD FIND IT HORRIFYING, BUT I SIMPLY CANNOT SPARE THE BRAIN-POWER TO CARE.
I FORGET TO ARREST MY PLIABILITY.
I FORGET TO CONSOLIDATE MY FORM INTO SOMETHING RESEMBLING THE ME I USED TO BE.
BEFORE THE INCIDENT.
BEFORE THE COSMIC RAYS.

FOUR DAYS LEFT.
THE RAYS.
THE COSMIC RAYS.
NO. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. MY METABOLISM, IT RESISTS NEARLY EVERY VIRAL INFECTION KNOWN TO MAN, YOU SEE?
AT THE VERY LEAST, IT SLOWS THEM TO A CRAWL.
WE EXPOSE THE POPULACE, THE ENTIRE POPULACE, TO COSMIC RAYS.
BUT, PROFESSOR, THE RAYS' EFFECTS ARE UNPREDICTABLE!
I'VE BEEN FIGHTING THE UNPREDICTABLE ALL MY LIFE, H.E.R.B.I.E.
CANCEL ALL MEALS AND SLEEP FOR THE NEXT 48 HOURS.
WE'RE GOING TO SAVE HUMANITY.
IN OUR EARLY DAYS, THERE WAS AN FF TOY LINE. THE OTHERS SOLD RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS, WHILE MY ACTION FIGURE SAT ON THE SHELF, UNBOUGHT.
BY THE THIRD WAVE OF FIGURES, I'D BEEN CUT OUT ENTIRELY.
NOW, WHY DID I THINK OF THAT, I WONDER?
ALL THE FIREPOWER OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMPUTERS...
...AND WE'RE GOING TO SAVE EARTH WITH BUNSEN BURNERS AND PETRI DISHES.
PROFESSOR, INCOMING CALL FROM THE AVENGERS SATELLITE NETWORK.
YOUR CHILDREN ARE CALLING TO WISH YOU GOOD NIGHT.
...
I'LL CALL THEM BACK.
PROFESSOR...
I'LL CALL THEM BACK.

THREE DAYS LEFT.
YOU'VE LOOKED BETTER, REED. TELL ME YOU'RE OKAY.
TELL ME WE'RE NOT PUTTING THE WORLD'S ENTIRE DWINDLING SUPPLY OF HOPE IN THE RUBBERY FINGERS OF A MAN WHO'S LOST IT.
ANTHONY, LISTEN TO ME.
I'VE DONE IT.
YOU'VE FOUND A CURE?
IT'S NOT A CURE, ANTHONY. THERE IS NO CURE. THE INFECTED ARE GONE, A LOST CAUSE. WE HAVE TO FACE THAT.
IT'S A VACCINE.
IT'S SMALL AND PETTY. BUT I IMAGINE MY ACTION-FIGURE SALES WILL TAKE A SIGNIFICANT JUMP AFTER THIS.
I WANT YOU TO DOWNLOAD H.E.R.B.I.E.--HE HAS ALL THE INFORMATION TO START PRODUCTION.
AND THEN I'M GOING HOME TO BE WITH MY FAMILY.
REED.
I'M SORRY. I CAN'T NOT SAY THIS. YOU DESERVE SO, SO MUCH BETTER.
IT WAS THE SUPER-SKRULL, REED.
"HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST A-LEVEL THREATS TO GET THE VIRUS.
"THE FF FOUGHT HIM.
"YOU, REED. YOU WERE THERE.
"YOU WON THE BATTLE.
"BUT--
"BUT THE WORLD LOST THE FANTASTIC FOUR."

AND THEN, THEY WERE GONE.


ONE DAY LEFT.
DOOM. PUPPET MASTER. GALACTUS.
I FOUGHT THEM ALL AND WON.
AND HERE I WAS COMPLETELY RENT ASUNDER BY AN UNEXPECTED FOE.
GRIEF.
LOSS OF EVERYONE I LOVE.
I'M PLIABLE. BUT IF STRETCHED TOO FAR, I BREAK.
AND I WAS STRETCHED TOO FAR.
TOO FAR BY MILES.
IT'S TIME FOR YOUR PREPARED SUPPER, PROFESSOR.
I'M NOT HUNGRY, H.E.R.B.I.E.
YOU'LL CLEAN UP THE SPIRE WHEN...WHEN IT'S TIME, WON'T YOU?
IT WILL BE MY HONOR, SIR.
MY METABOLISM SLOWS VIRUSES TO A CRAWL.
BUT NOT TO A STOP.
I'M GOING TO MISS THE UNIVERSE, H.E.R.B.I.E.
YES, SIR.
WELL. IT'S TIME.
LET'S GO EXPLORING.
THE END.


It's been nearly four centuries--and countless worlds--since all this started...
...with no end in sight.
SKUTTLEBUTT, CAN'T YOU GO ANY FASTER?
I'M ALREADY PUSHING MYSELF BEYOND RECOMMENDED LIMITS, BILL.

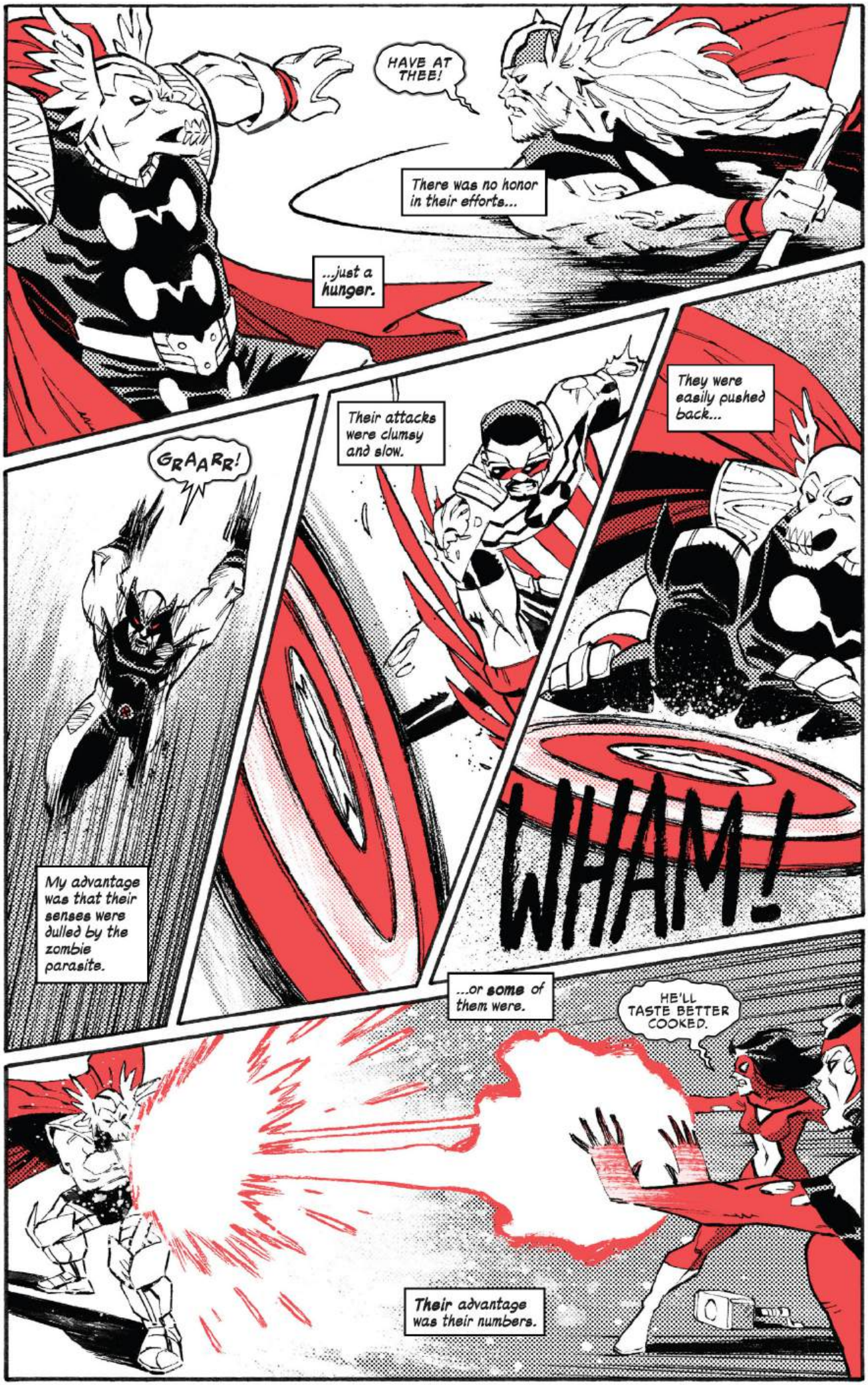
I'd received a distress call from my oathbrother, Thor.
The Realm Eternal was under attack from invaders I'd never seen nor heard of before.

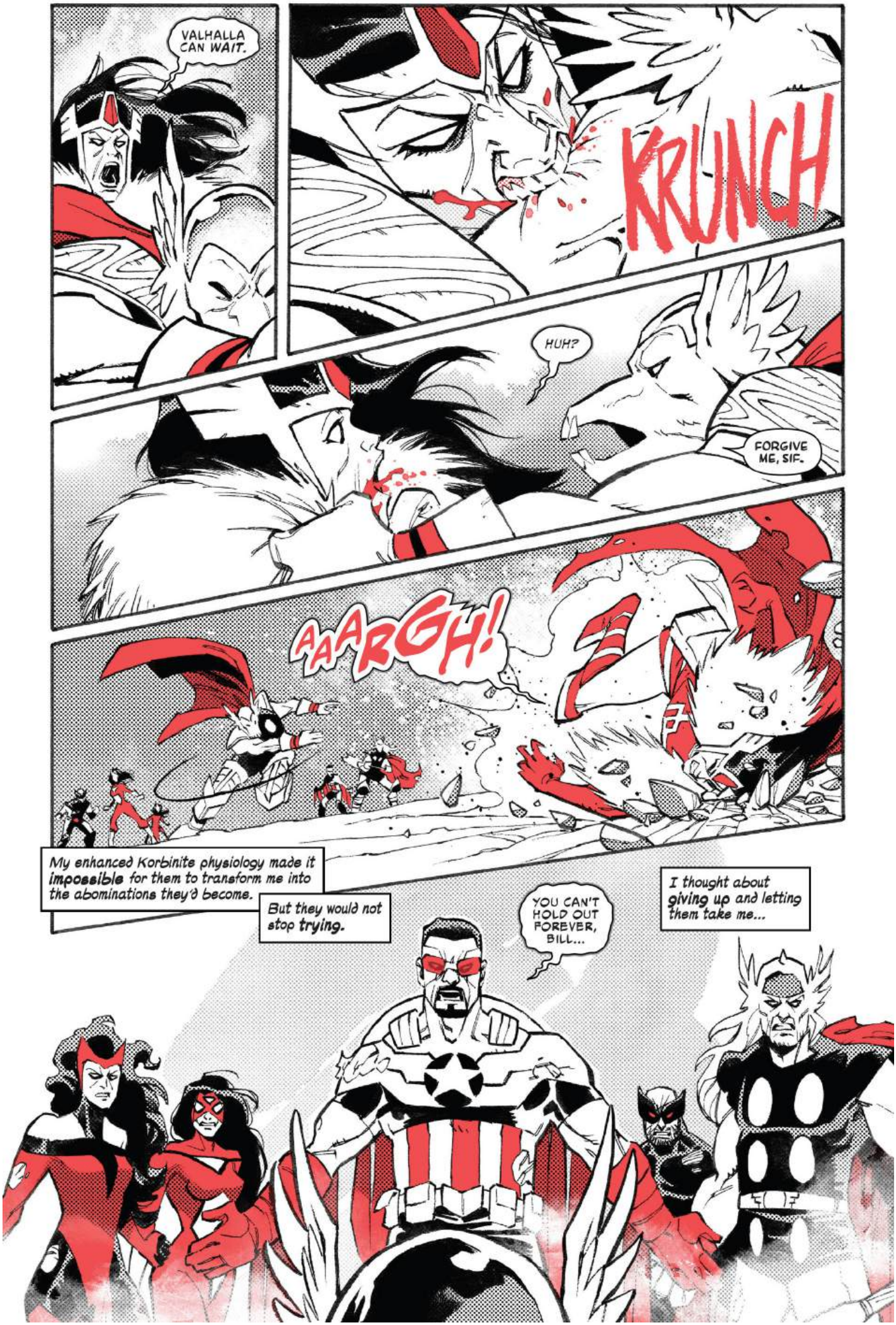
The Asgardians were being overrun.
Who knew how much time they had left.

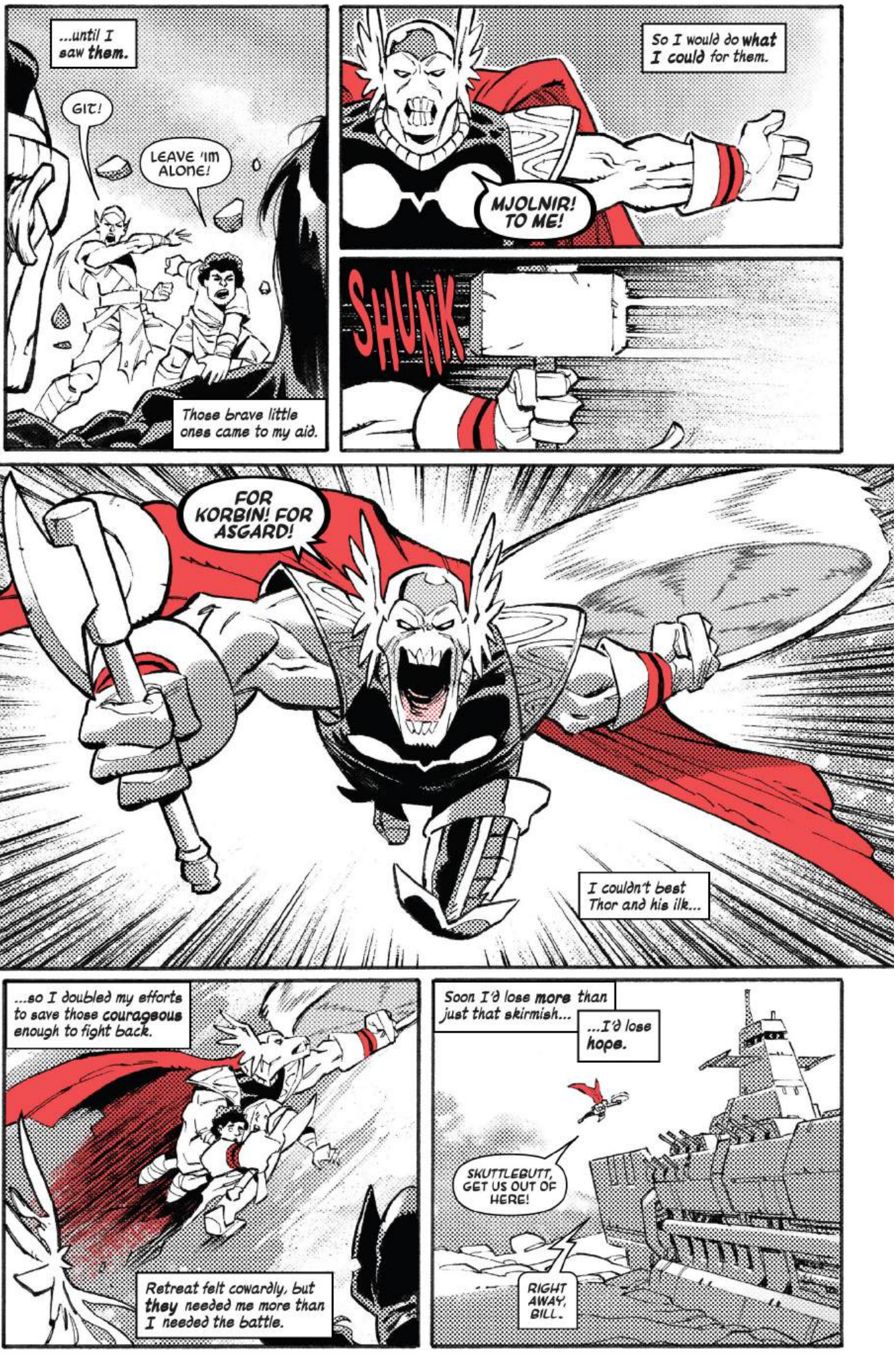
I lost my people. I lost Korbin.*
On my life, I would not let Asgard fall.
*SEE THOR #337! --AB

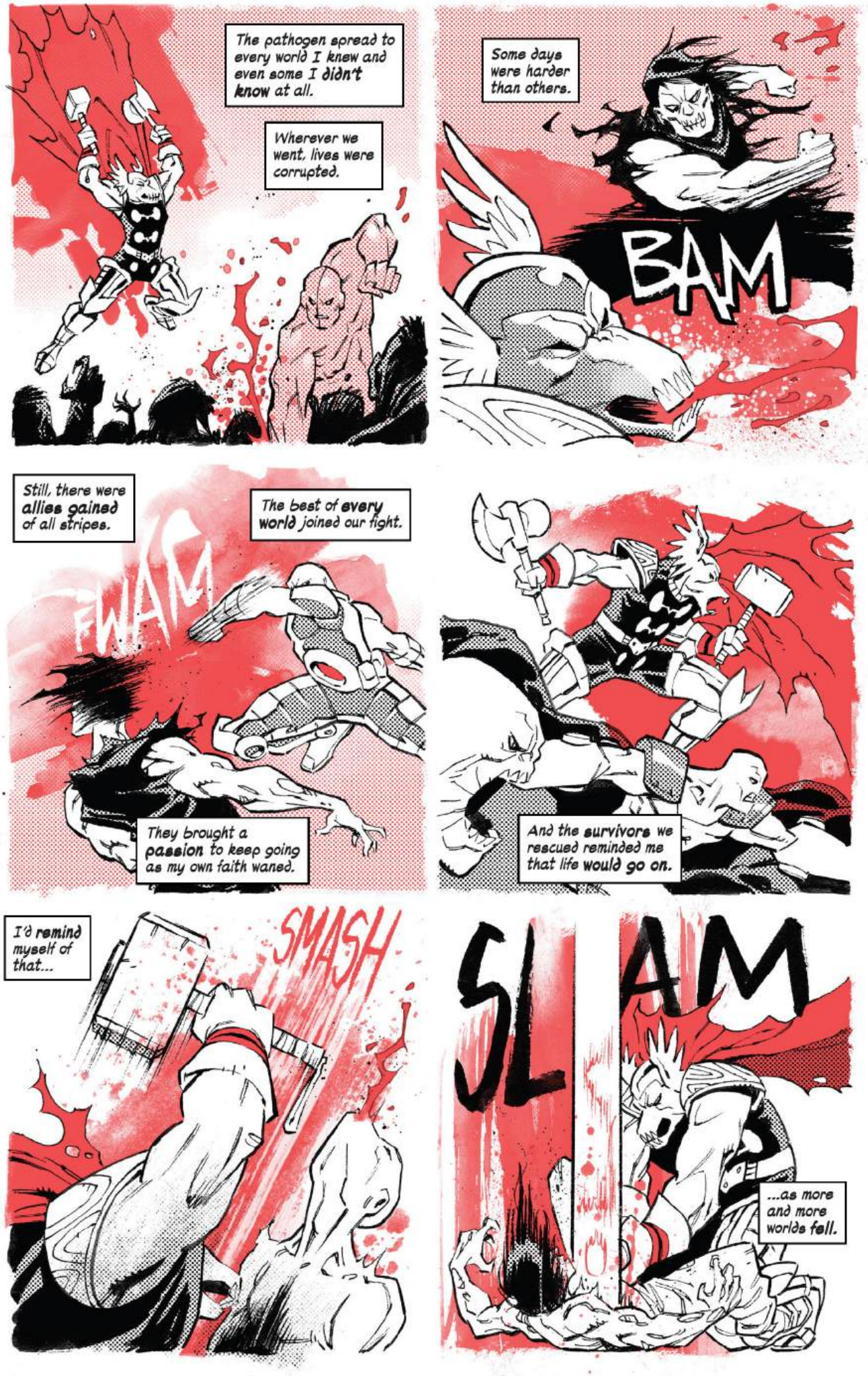
How wrong I would be.
NO...
Nothing short of Surtur or Galactus could lay waste to Asgard like this.
The carnage was devastating--unlike anything I'd ever seen.
SIF...
SIF!
BILL...
...YOUR FACE...IS THE LAST I WISH TO SEE...BEFORE VALHALLA.
I'M SORRY. I TRIED-- SKUTTLEBUTT WENT AS FAST AS SHE-- I FAILED YOU, SIF.
YOU FAILED US ALL, BROTHER.

Before my eyes, my worst fears were made real.
They'd already been turned...
...but into what, I had yet to discover.
GRNN...
THOR... AVENGERS... WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU?
YOU CAN HOLD STILL, BUB.
SNIKT


HAVE AT THEE!
There was no honor in their efforts...
...just a hunger.
They were easily pushed back...
Their attacks were clumsy and slow.
GRAARR!
My advantage was that their senses were dulled by the zombie parasite.
WHAM!
...or some of them were.
HE'LL TASTE BETTER COOKED.
Their advantage was their numbers.


VALHALLA CAN WAIT.
KRUNCH
HUH?
FORGIVE ME, SIF.
AARGH!
My enhanced Korbinite physiology made it **impossible** for them to transform me into the abominations they'd become.
But they would not stop **trying.**
YOU CAN'T HOLD OUT FOREVER, BILL...
I thought about **giving up** and letting them take me...


...until I saw them.
GIT!
LEAVE 'IM ALONE!
Those brave little ones came to my aid.
So I would do what I could for them.
MJOLNIR! TO ME!
SHUNK
FOR KORBIN! FOR ASGARD!
I couldn't best Thor and his ilk...
...so I doubled my efforts to save those courageous enough to fight back.
Retreat felt cowardly, but they needed me more than I needed the battle.
Soon I'd lose more than just that skirmish...
...I'd lose hope.
SKUTTLEBUTT, GET US OUT OF HERE!
RIGHT AWAY, BILL.


The pathogen spread to every world I knew and even some I didn't know at all.
Wherever we went, lives were corrupted.
Some days were harder than others.
BAM
Still, there were allies gained of all stripes.
The best of every world joined our fight.
FWAM
They brought a passion to keep going as my own faith waned.
And the survivors we rescued reminded me that life would go on.
I'd remind myself of that...
SMASH
SL
AM
...as more and more worlds fell.

DEEP SPACE. A CENTURY LATER.
⇒SIGH⇐
BILL? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU DIDN'T COME TO DINNER, AND MOTHER WAS WORRIED.
AREN'T YOU HUNGRY?
YOU CAN HAVE MY RATIONS, EGOZ, I'LL BE FINE.
THEN WHAT'S WRONG?
I... I MISS MY FRIENDS.
WHERE ARE THEY?
THEY PASSED AWAY LONG AGO.
BUT YOU CAN MAKE NEW FRIENDS, RIGHT?
I SUPPOSE I CAN, YES.
In that moment, Egoz gave me back something I had lost long ago...
...hope.
THANK YOU, EGOZ.

THE PLANET ORDINATO.
MANY DECADES LATER.
Despite the centuries gone by...
...the words of that young one stay with me.
BILL!
HOPE
WE'VE PICKED UP A DISTRESS SIGNAL ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE PLANET.
SHANY'N IS DOING A SCAN NOW.
COULD IT BE MORE SURVIVORS?
I HOPE SO.
EGOZ, GATHER THE TEAM.

Time moves on, and this plague persists...
...but life also persists...

...and so do heroes.

END.

THE HUNGER!
I MUST FEED!
WE ALL KNEW DOMINO WAS GOING TO BE HARD TO BRING DOWN, BUT THAT WAS TOO CLOSE.
FEED US!
YOU X-FORCE MORONS ARE JUST FORTUNATE THIS ROOM HAS A POWER-DAMPENING FIELD, OR I'D BURN THIS WHOLE PLACE DOWN!
WELL, DOMINO IS THE LUCKIEST MUTANT ALIVE. HOW WE MANAGED TO GET THROUGH THAT WITHOUT LOSING ANYONE IS A MINOR MIRACLE.
I GUESS THIS TIME, SHE JUST WASN'T LUCKY ENOUGH.
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT.

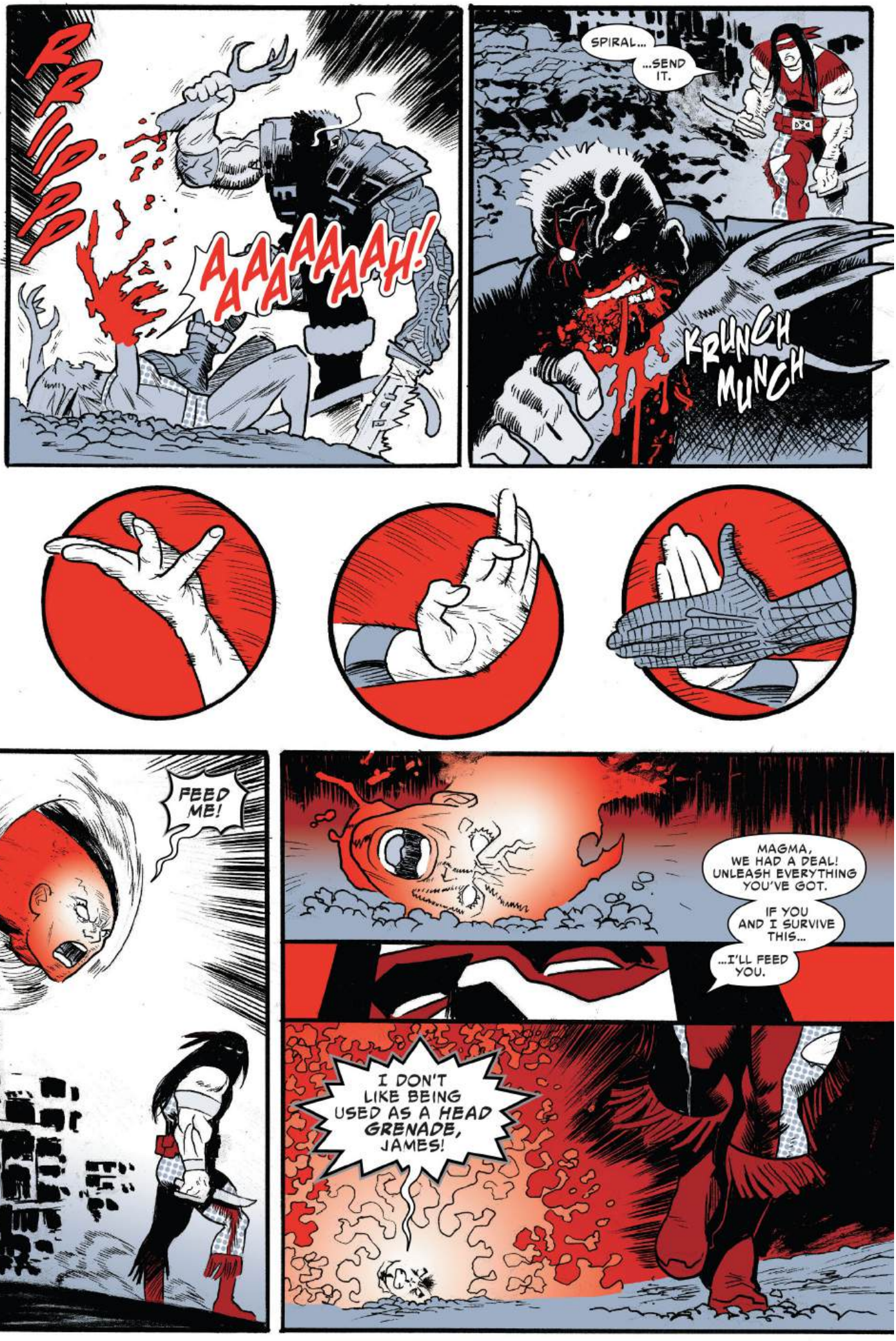
WARPATH?
NO!
SIRYN.
CANNONBALL.
FERAL.
SPIRAL.
BOOM-BOOM.
IT'S OKAY, SIRYN.
WE ALL KNEW THIS DAY WOULD EVENTUALLY COME FOR ALL OF US. WE'RE FIGHTING A WAR WE KNOW WE CAN'T WIN.
OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO PUT OURSELVES BETWEEN ZOMBIE MUTANTS AND THEIR PREY. WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO STAND A CHANCE OF STOPPING THEM.
THERE ARE CERTAIN FAMILY MEMBERS WE'VE AVOIDED GOING AFTER BECAUSE WE KNEW WHAT IT WOULD COST US.
THE FACT IS I'M DEAD EITHER WAY, SO I'M GOING AFTER THE ONE MUTANT ZOMBIE I'VE LEAST WANTED TO FACE.
CABLE.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE'VE AVOIDED HIM FOR FAR TOO LONG. I'M IN.
COME ON, SAM. IT WOULD BE SENSELESS TO RISK THE WHOLE TEAM JUST TO--
I'M IN TOO.
HELL YEAH!
COUNT ME IN.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA ON HOW WE CAN SAY HI TO THE OLD MAN.
AND I'LL MAKE IT SO YOU ROLL IT RIGHT TO HIS FEET.

1.
KRUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
!
WARPATH.
LET US HELP YOU, CABLE.
YOU WERE LIKE A FATHER TO ME...TO US. WE CAN'T STAND TO SEE YOU LIKE THIS.
NOT YOU.

BOOM
HE'S NOT GONNA LISTEN, WARPATH.
HE'S TOO FAR GONE!
JUST GO DOWN, CABLE!
THE HUNGER WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
WORDS CAN'T EXPLAIN THE SENSATION. IT'S LIKE A FEVER LUST, ONLY SEVERAL ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE HIGHER.
YOU'RE INFECTED, JAMES.
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND SOON ENOUGH.
THOOM
KRASH
CANNONBALL?

LISTEN TO HIM, CABLE!
IF YOU EVER CARED ABOUT US...
YOU, X-FORCE AND THE X-MEN WERE ALL I EVER CARED ABOUT, SAM.
NOW, GUYS!
POUR IT ON!
EEEEEEEEE!
YOU GOT A FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING IT, OLD MAN!
I...I MUST FEED.
KOOOOM


RRIPP
AAAAAAAAH!
SPIRAL...
...SEND IT.
KRUNCH MUNCH
FEED ME!
MAGMA, WE HAD A DEAL! UNLEASH EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT.
IF YOU AND I SURVIVE THIS...
...I'LL FEED YOU.
I DON'T LIKE BEING USED AS A HEAD GRENADE, JAMES!

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, JAMES?
MAGMA WILL BURN DOWN THE ENTIRE CITY!
WHAT CITY?! LOOK AROUND--LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE DONE!
SHIK
SHUK
THUNK
YOU'RE GOING TO GET US BOTH KILLED.
SCHWIK
THAT WAS ALWAYS THE PLAN.
?

NOOO!
THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE!
THIS IS WHAT YOU TRAINED ME FOR ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
TO SAVE THOSE WHO COULDN'T SAVE THEMSELVES.
I WILL MISS YOU, MY FRIEND.
SSSSSS

SHAK
JAMES, YOU DID IT!
WE NEED TO GET FERAL BACK TO BASE NOW. BEFORE SHE BLEEDS OUT.
JAMES?
I MUST FEED!
THE HUNGER!
SPIRAL, GET EVERYONE OUT OF HERE NOW! LEAVE WARPATH!
HE'S...
...HE'S...
I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU, JAMES.
I PROMISE.
THE END.

#3

A DEMON DAYS STORY:
"JUJU AND THE GIFT
OF THE INSECT BEAD"

HM?! THERE'S SOMETHING UNEASY IN THE AIR...

JUJU-SAN! I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR THE OTHER DAY!
WHY, HELLO, SUZUME.

HUH! AN INSECT BEAD.
THAT IS A SPECIAL BEAD MADE IN MY VILLAGE. I'M SURE IT WILL COME IN HANDY ONE DAY.

WELL, THANKS! NOW, YOU BETTER GO HOME BEFORE A HUMAN SEES YOU.

JUJU-SAAAAN!
GEEZ, WHAT A BUSY DAY... WHAT IS IT, BAN-SAN?

PLEASE COME WITH ME! SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAS HAPPENED!
THEIR--THEIR *TONGUES* ARE MISSING!

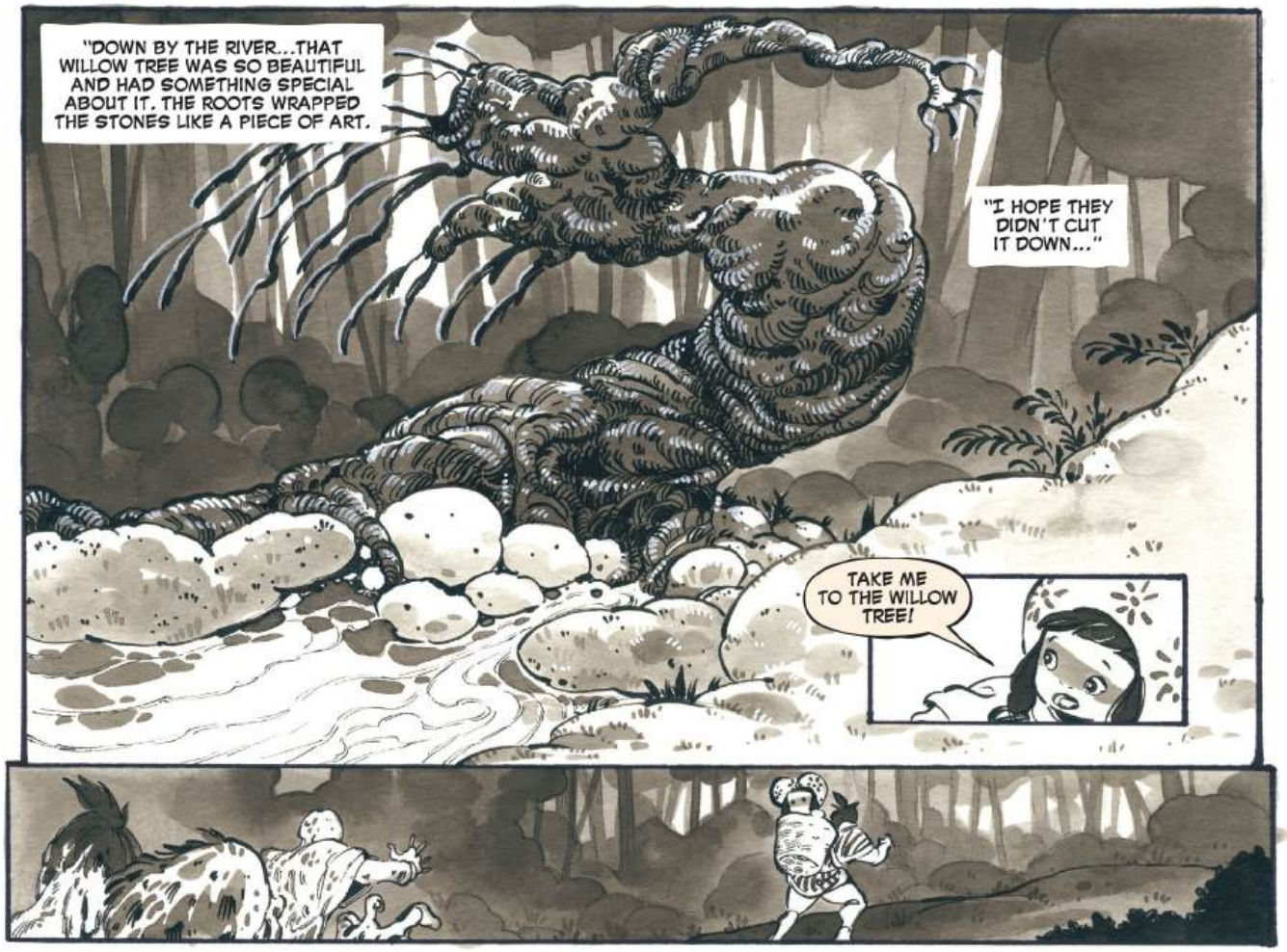
TAKE ME THERE.

WHAT THE...?
I WAS JUST PLANNING TO CRASH FOR THE NIGHT, AND...
...I SMELLED A STRONG STENCH. SO I PEEKED TO SEE WHAT IT WAS...
THIS MUST BE THE UNEASY FEELING I WAS HAVING.
WOW, HIS TONGUE REALLY IS GONE.
THIS CAN'T BE...
DO YOU KNOW THE STORY ABOUT *JYUUROKUNIN DAN!?**
*THE VALLEY OF SIXTEEN.
HUH?

"IT'S A STORY FROM TOYAMA PREFECTURE. FIFTEEN LUMBERJACKS WERE FOUND DEAD WITH THEIR TONGUES MISSING.
"THERE WAS ONE SURVIVOR. HE SAID THAT A YOUNG LADY CAME TO THEM IN A DREAM AND WARNED THEM NOT TO CUT THE SACRED WILLOW TREE.

"ALL SIXTEEN LUMBERJACKS SAW THE SAME DREAM, BUT THEY IGNORED HER WARNING AND WERE CURSED.
"SOME CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN A GHOSTLY WOMAN WITH A NECKLACE MADE OF *TONGUES*."

WHAT?! THEY'RE MOVING--ARE THEY ALIVE?!
NOT QUITE "ALIVE"--LOOKS LIKE THE LEGEND WAS TRUE.
WHAT DO WE DO?!
IN ORDER TO STOP THEM, I NEED TO APPEASE THE WRATH OF THE CURSE.
THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN OR HIDE IN THIS HOUSE! LET'S ESCAPE WHILE WE CAN!
WHEN I WAS WALKING DOWN THE KIRISAKI RIDGE, I MET SOME LUMBERJACKS BRAGGING ABOUT A HUGE WILLOW TREE THEY HAD FELLED.
DO YOU THINK IT WAS THEM?


"DOWN BY THE RIVER...THAT WILLOW TREE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL AND HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT IT. THE ROOTS WRAPPED THE STONES LIKE A PIECE OF ART.
"I HOPE THEY DIDN'T CUT IT DOWN..."
TAKE ME TO THE WILLOW TREE!

THERE-- OH NO...

!

DO YOU SEE HER?
SEE WHO?

THEY'RE COMING...

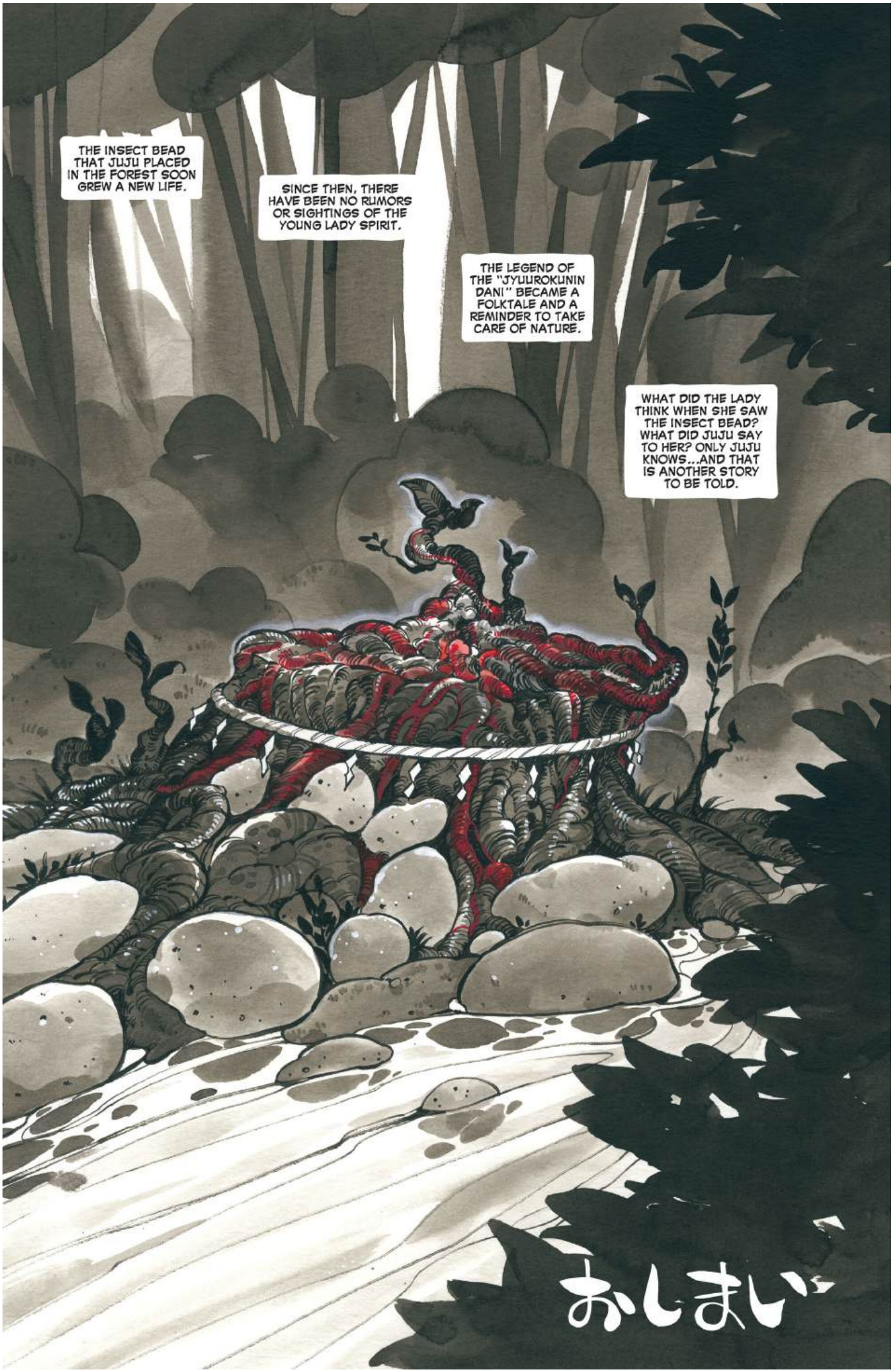
THERE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, JUJU-SAN?!

HUMANS... WHAT DID YOU DO NOW?
YOU SAID YOU ARE JUJU... I WILL REMEMBER YOUR NAME.

THEY... THEY'RE GOING INTO THE ROOTS...?

JUJU-SAN... WHAT DID YOU DO?
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING BUT PRAY TO HER.

I JUST PAID MY RESPECTS TO THE FOREST.
BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT THAT INSECT BEAD TO WORK. IT REALLY WAS SPECIAL...


THE INSECT BEAD THAT JUJU PLACED IN THE FOREST SOON GREW A NEW LIFE.
SINCE THEN, THERE HAVE BEEN NO RUMORS OR SIGHTINGS OF THE YOUNG LADY SPIRIT.
THE LEGEND OF THE "JYUUROKUNIN DANI" BECAME A FOLKTALE AND A REMINDER TO TAKE CARE OF NATURE.
WHAT DID THE LADY THINK WHEN SHE SAW THE INSECT BEAD? WHAT DID JUJU SAY TO HER? ONLY JUJU KNOWS...AND THAT IS ANOTHER STORY TO BE TOLD.
おしまい

SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST.
WHAT DO WE THINK, NATASHA?
IT'S HARD TO SEE CLEARLY FROM HERE, BUT...
...IT DOES SEEM LIKE THERE ARE PEOPLE DOWN THERE.
ACTUAL ALIVE PEOPLE.
YEAH, I DON'T LIKE IT. TOO GOOD. TOO EASY.
I HEAR YOU, CLINT. BUT--IF IT'S TRUE? IF THEY ARE PROTECTED SOMEHOW?
AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, ALL WE'VE SURVIVED...DON'T WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES TO AT LEAST CHECK?
LOOK AT YOU, MISS GLASS-HALF-FULL. YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE COLD KGB ASSASSIN.
THAT VERSION OF ME BELIEVED I WAS ALREADY DEAD. COMPLETELY LACKING ANY REASON TO LIVE.
I DUG MYSELF OUT OF THAT HOLE BY ENSURING I WAS NEVER WITHOUT A DESTINATION. I NEED TO BELIEVE I'M HEADED TOWARD SOMETHING BETTER.
WITHOUT THAT, ALL I AM IS JUST...
...WHAT THEY MADE ME.
WELL, THEN--HERE'S TO HEADING TOWARD SOMETHING BETTER.

WOW! HAWKEYE AND BLACK WIDOW! WELCOME TO OUR LITTLE SANCTUARY, AVENGERS!
OH! THANK YOU!
THANK YOU.
I TAKE IT YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE YOU PICKED UP ONE OF OUR RADIO MESSAGES?
THAT'S RIGHT.
GOOD. THAT'S GOOD. GLAD TO HEAR THE RADIO TOWER'S WORKING.
INDEED. EVERYONE WHO REMAINS DESERVES THE SAFETY WE'VE BEEN SO PRIVILEGED TO ENJOY HERE.
I'D LOVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT, ACTUALLY.
WHAT KEEPS THE ZOMBIES AT BAY?
WELL, IT'S SOME SORT OF OBJECT...BUT TO BE FRANK, WE'RE NOT REALLY SURE WHAT IT IS, NOR HOW IT WORKS.
HELL, YOU'RE SUPER-FOLKS, RIGHT? MAYBE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TELL US...

IT'S JUST DOWN HERE.
IT'S... SURREAL. SEEING ACTUAL PEOPLE AGAIN.
THANK YOU, NAT. FOR KEEPING ME GOING. GIVING ME HOPE.
YOU CAN THANK ME ONCE WE UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, NOT BEFORE.
THIS DOESN'T LOOK FAMILIAR AT ALL. NOT ASGARDIAN OR KREE OR ANY SYSTEM OF MAGIC I--
--RECOGNIZE...
CRUNCH
+SIGH+
WHO SCREWED UP?

SKREEEE!
ARGH!
FWIP
BOOM
FWSSHHHHH
CLINT?! WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?
MARTINIQUE WYNGARDE...?
AH @#%$. GUESS SHE GOT ME BEFORE I GOT HER.
NAT, I'M SOR--
BANG
ME TOO.

THEY KILLED MY SISTER!
YES, WELL-- SHE'S THE ONE WHO GAVE US AWAY.
BECAUSE SHE WAS HUNGRY! FATHER!
NICK FURY?
AND-- MASTERMIND? AND THE MASTERMIND JUNIORS.
ILLUSIONISTS.
IT'S AN ILLUSION. A TRAP.
OF COURSE IT'S A TRAP. YOU LURE PEOPLE HERE, YOU PRETEND TO BE HUMAN, YOU EAT THE PEOPLE.
GOD! I'M SO STUPID!
I'M SORRY, NATASHA. WE DON'T WANT TO.
BUT UP THERE, IN TOWN, WE HAVE THE BEST SCIENTISTS FROM S.H.I.E.L.D. WORKING ON A CURE FOR... ALL OF THIS.
THOUGH BECAUSE THEY'RE INFECTED, THOSE BIG BRAINS ONLY WORK...AS LONG AS THEY'RE FED.
YOU HEARD THE MAN. WE'RE HEROES, DARLING.
YOU'RE DELUDED. KNEE-DEEP IN CORPSES, TRYING TO JUSTIFY IT TO YOURSELVES.
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THOSE WHO STILL CAN BE SAVED, NATASHA!
NO. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO SAVE.
WE'RE ALL ALREADY DEAD.

SQSHH
BANG BANG BANG BANG
SPLSHH
BANG BANG BANG BANG
SQSHH
BANG BANG BANG BANG
ARGHHH!

SCHING
RRARGGHH!
SCHLIKK
NATASHA, THERE'S STILL--
BANG

I REMEMBER THIS FEELING.
THE DESPAIR.
I'D FORGOTTEN HOW *EMPOWERING* IT IS.
THE CERTAINTY THAT NO MATTER WHERE YOU FIND YOURSELF...
ONE GOT AWAY!
GET HER!
WHOEVER BRINGS HER DOWN GETS HALF!
...YOU'LL ALWAYS BE THE ONE WITH THE LEAST TO LOSE.
BANG BANG BANG BANG

EVERYONE ELSE, WITH THEIR *DESIRES* AND *CONCERNS*...
CLK CLK
DAMN IT.
...RENDERED TOO DESPERATE OR TOO HESITANT.
LEAVING YOU TO DANCE. EFFORTLESSLY.
RIGHT THROUGH THEM ALL.
FWIP
THOOOM
IT'S *EXHILARATING*.
SPLSHK

UNTIL THE MUSIC STOPS.
AND YOU REMEMBER THAT YOU WIN BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOTHING.
AND NOWHERE LEFT TO GO.
END.

THE PLACE: NEW YORK CITY.
THE TIME: RIGHT ON, BROTHER.
HMMPH! HOPE I GET TO KEEP THESE THREADS WHEN THE GIG IS THROUGH.
HEY, LUKE! WHAT YOU KNOW GOOD?
MISTY? WHAT YOU DOING HERE, GIRL?
THAT'S MR. RAND'S PLUS-ONE TO YOU, BABY! DANNY SAID YOU'D BE WORKING THIS SHINDIG TONIGHT.
EVERY CAT WANTS HIS OWN HERO ON RETAINER NOW. IT'S ALL ABOUT SHOWING OUT AND SHOWING OFF SINCE STARK POPPED UP WITH THAT TIN CAN.
YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE FIRST SUPER-HEROIC RECIPIENT OF THE VON STRUCKER STIPEND! CREATED TO REINTEGRATE EX-CONS--AND FRAMED MEN OF INNOCENCE SUCH AS MYSELF--BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY.
WELL, THAT EXPLAINS THE FANCY GETUP.
FROM EX-OFFENDER TO DEFENDER, BABY! REAL SILK AND STERLING SILVER! WERNER'S PEOPLE HAD IT SENT OVER.
I'M ON BODYGUARD DUTY. I'M WATCHING THE DAUGHTER.
LEXI.
MR. CAGE!
WITH A GETUP LIKE THAT, I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE THE ONLY ONE WATCHING HER.
AND WATCH YOURSELF TOO. RUMOR HAS IT THAT ONE'S A MANEATER.
I WAS SO DELIGHTED WHEN DADDY SAID YOU WOULD BE MY EYES AND EARS FOR TONIGHT.

AND WHAT LOVELY EYES THEY ARE.
SO SORRY TO BORE YOU WITH A STUFFY OL' FUNDRAISER, BUT GOOD WORKS REQUIRE GOOD PRESS!
I'M SURE WE CAN SCROUNGE UP SOME EXCITEMENT AFTER DADDY'S SPEECH.
UH...
OH, I ALMOST FORGOT--THING ONE AND THING TWO--NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH YOUR ROCKY CELEBRITY COMPATRIOT!
AS SOON AS I STEP IN THE BUILDING, THEY BECOME MY LITTLE SHADOWS--AND I SUPPOSE YOURS TOO TONIGHT. VON STRUCKER'S LATEST INVENTION!
GREETINGS!
TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE, PLEASE ACTIVATE.
DON'T WORRY, THEY DON'T BITE.
I DON'T EITHER. UNLESS YOU ASK NICELY.
LOOKS LIKE THE SHOW IS ABOUT TO START.
MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE?!
IT HAS BEEN A LONG JOURNEY TO THIS PLACE! A JOURNEY FILLED WITH DEGRADATION, EXPERIMENTATION AND REHABILITATION.
BUT ALL WORTH IT! BECAUSE RESIDING AT THE END WAS VICTORY!

I BRING TO YOU A NEW AGE OF *UBER-MEN!* NOT MACHINE, NOR MUTANT MONSTROSITY--BUT THE PINNACLE OF *HUMANITY!* AN ADAM OF *SCIENCE* AND *CIVIC DUTY!*
I KNOW THAT FACE. COULD NEVER FORGET IT.
THE PRISON GUARD WHO SOLD US OFF TO THAT *RESEARCH FACILITY.*
CAUSED THE ACCIDENT THAT MADE ME WHAT I AM.
RACKHAM.
I ASSURE YOU THE TESTING HAS BEEN RIGOROUS. WE HAVE BESTED THE RESULTS OF TULLY AND REINSTEIN! SURPASSED *HOWARD STARK!*
LET'S GO, MAMA. THIS AIN'T THE SCENE FOR US. I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT IT'S ABOUT TO GET UGLY IN HERE.
BUT DADDY'S *SPEECH!*
HEARD SPEECHES LIKE HIS ALL MY LIFE, BABY.
YOU ARE BEING ABSURD! AND RUINING MY FATHER'S *BIG NIGHT,* MIGHT I ADD!
HE'LL HAVE NEW *SPECIMENS* TO SHOW OFF SOON ENOUGH. HE DON'T NEED ME.

AND WE HAVE FINALLY UNRAVELED THE MYSTERY OF *CAPTAIN AMERICA* THAT CHALLENGED *MY FATHER* FOR SO MANY YEARS.
THIS IS THE NIGHT HISTORY WILL BE MADE! WILL COURSE-CORRECT IN OUR FAVOR! VON STRUCKER'S *SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM*--SUPERIOR TO THE CLUMSY ATTEMPTS OF OUR PREDECESSORS--WILL ELEVATE THESE SIX MEN TO HEIGHTS HERETOFORE UNSEEN!
"WITH THIS NEW CADRE OF ELITE WARRIORS TO DEFEND US, WE WILL SWEEP THE DROSS OF THE STREETS BACK INTO THE GUTTERS.
FSSSST...!
"RECLAIM OUR BIRTHRIGHT.
"AND RETURN TRUE GLORY TO THE *VON STRUCKER* NAME."

SUBJECT CONSCIOUS.
SCANNING.
DESIGNATION, LUKE CAGE. ATTEMPTING ENGAGEMENT.
WH-WHAT...?
GREETINGS, MR. CAGE! I AM PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR VITAL SIGNS ARE NORMAL.
IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU SELECT SECURITY ACTIVATION.
ACTIVATE!
SECURITY PROGRAMMING INITIALIZED.
HOW LONG I BEEN OUT?
ACCESSING SECURITY FILES.
PROCESSING.
TWENTY-EIGHT MINUTES AND TWELVE SECONDS.

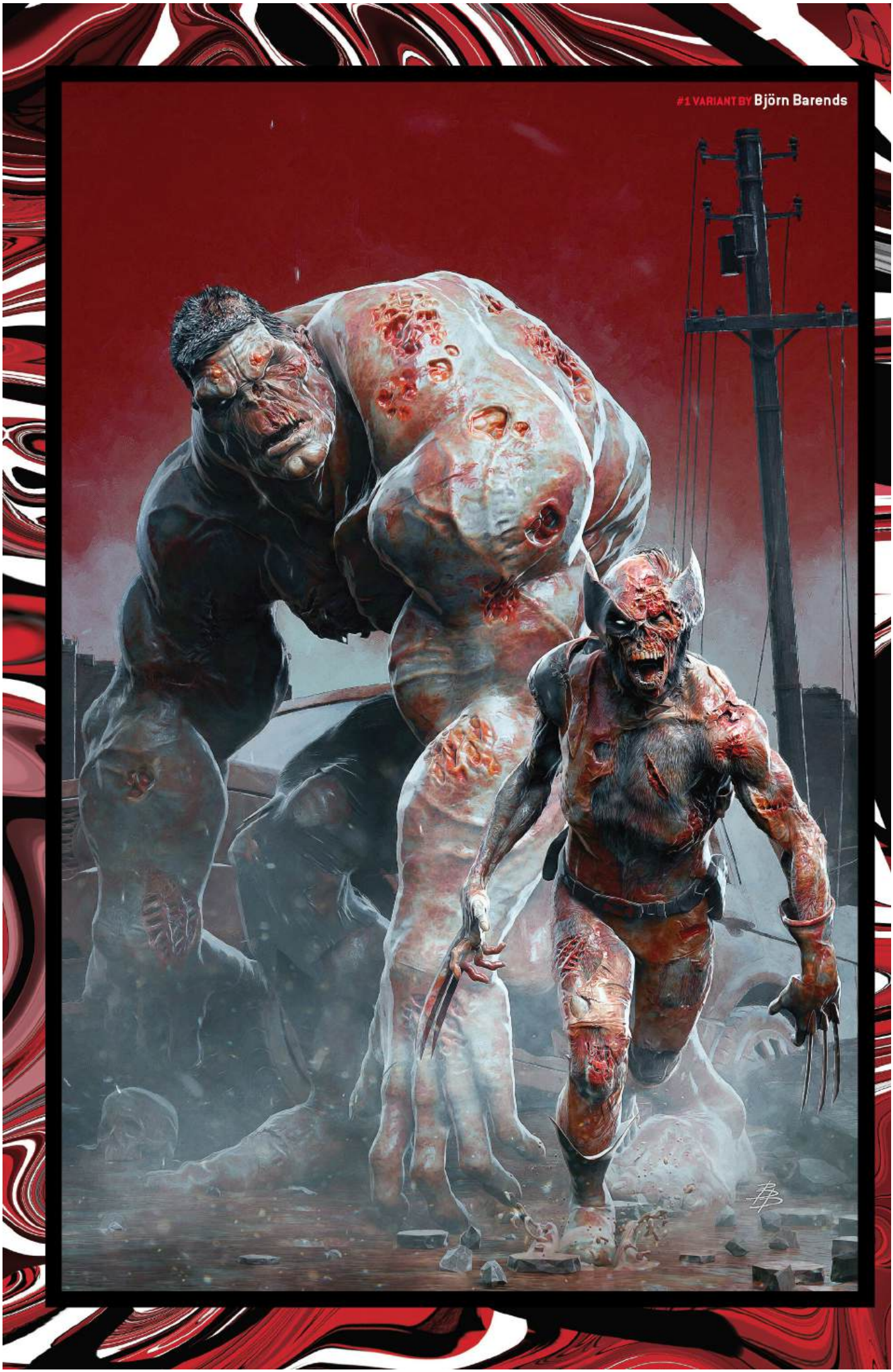
WHAT THE HELL COULD HAVE HAD ME DOWN AND OUT FOR THAT LONG?
CAGE.
OH. OH NO.
MISTY.
I'D ENJOY PROVING WHICH ONE OF US IS THE BETTER MAN, RACKHAM.
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU AIN'T ONE NO MO'.
RRRAAUGH!
THAT'S RIGHT!
C'MON, %$#@&$%!

BOOM
YOU SURVIVED.
I GUESS YOUR FATHER MADE SURE I WAS BUILT TO LAST.
HE BUILT OTHER THINGS TOO.

THE BUNKER WAS THE FIRST THING DADDY INSTALLED.
"A MAN WHO KNOWS WHEN TO RETREAT WILL LIVE TO RULE WHAT REMAINS, DARLING."
VNNNNNNNNN!...
NGH!
STAY WITH ME, MAMA! C'MON NOW! I WAS PAID TO KEEP YOU SAFE AND I'M GONNA FINISH THAT JOB.
A MAN AIN'T NOTHING WITHOUT HIS WORD.
RETINAL SCAN REQUIRED.
ONCE YOU'RE LOCKED TIGHT IN THIS BUNKER, I'M GON' GO OUT AND SEE WHAT I CAN SEE.
AREN'T A LOT OF MEN BUILT LIKE ME OUT THERE, BUT I KNOW A FEW. TOGETHER, MAYBE WE CAN PUT A STOP TO THIS--OR AT LEAST GET AS MANY AS WE CAN SOMEWHERE SAFE.
Beep Beep Beep!
SCAN INCONCLUSIVE. RECALIBRATING FILES.
DADDY, PLEASE!
ALEXANDRIA VON STRUCKER. YOUR FORM HAS BEEN COMPROMISED.
ENTRY DENIED.
FFFUTH!

WOMAN, ARE YOU...
...CRAZY?!
DID YOU THINK I WOULD LET YOU RULE THIS ACCURSED WORLD? I, A VON STRUCKER?!
A WORLD IN WHICH YOU ARE ITS SAVIOR IS NO WORLD WORTH CLAIMING!
I COULD NOT BEAR TO BE A PART OF IT. NOT AS THIS. IT WILL DIE WITH ME. WITH THE INFECTION.
WITH US.
I KNOW YOU FEEL THE HUNGER. YOU THINK YOURSELF TOO NOBLE TO FEED UPON ME? TOO PROUD TO PROVE YOURSELF A MAN OF NO WORD?
ALLOW ME TO DISABUSE YOU OF THAT NOTION, CAGE. THOSE OF YOUR KIND HAVE BEEN TOOLS. PLAYTHINGS. BUT NEVER MEN.
AND NOW-- HRCK--YOU ARE MERELY A MONSTER.

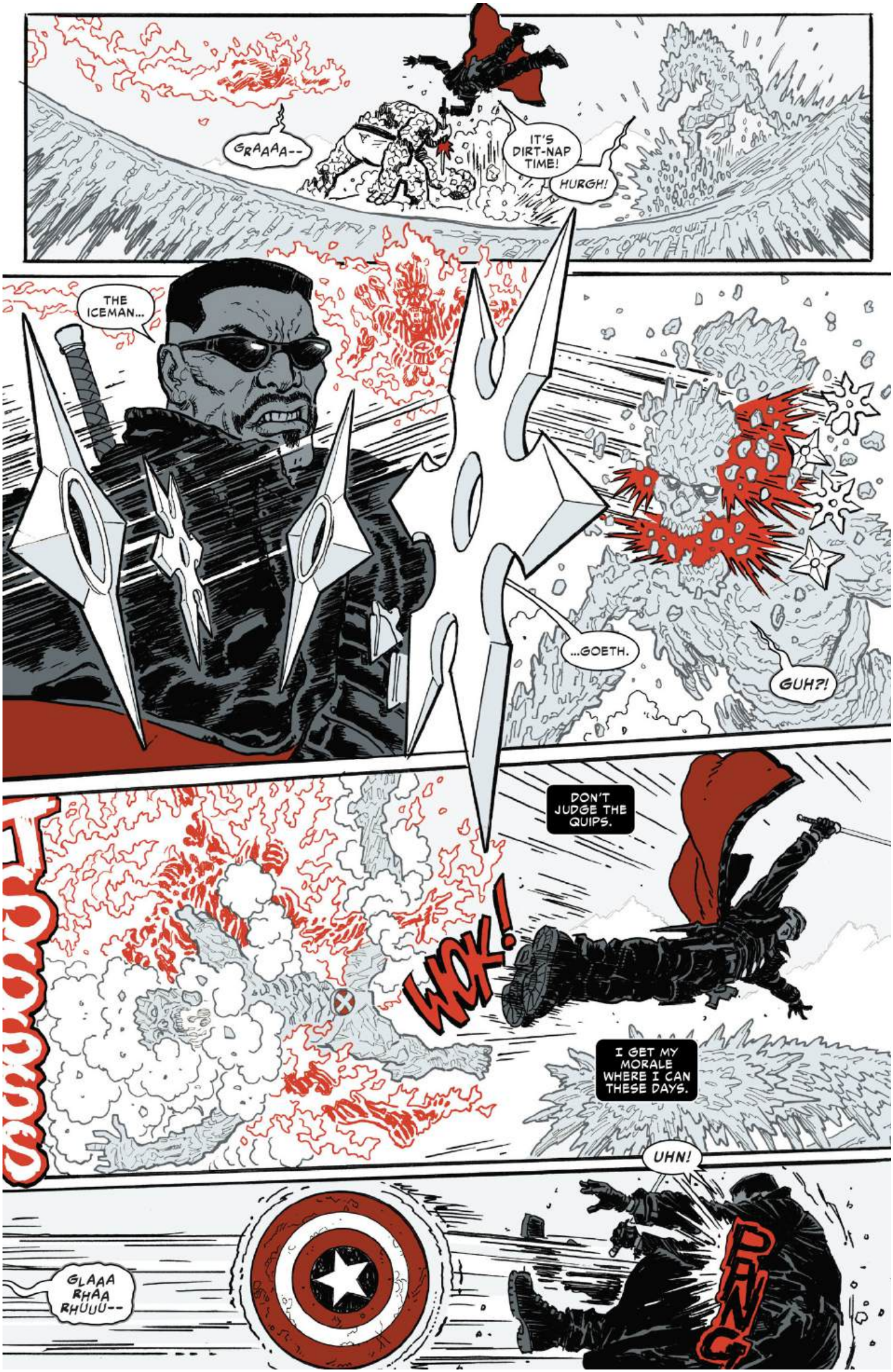
ENOUGH!
SMACK!
NGH!
ENOUGH.
NEVER... ENOUGH.
END.


#1 VARIANT BY Björn Barends

#4

THE ZOMBIE PLAGUE HAS TAKEN OVER THE WORLD AND EVERY SUPERHUMAN IN IT. THERE ISN'T A SINGLE SAFE PLACE LEFT ANYWHERE ON EARTH...EXCEPT ONE.
THE ROAD THERE IS PAVED WITH SUPER-GHOULS. SO NOW I GOTTA DEAL WITH ZOMBIE MR. FANTASTIC.
MORE LIKE MR. SO-SO.
BLADE in
"STRANGE-ASS BEDFELLOWS"

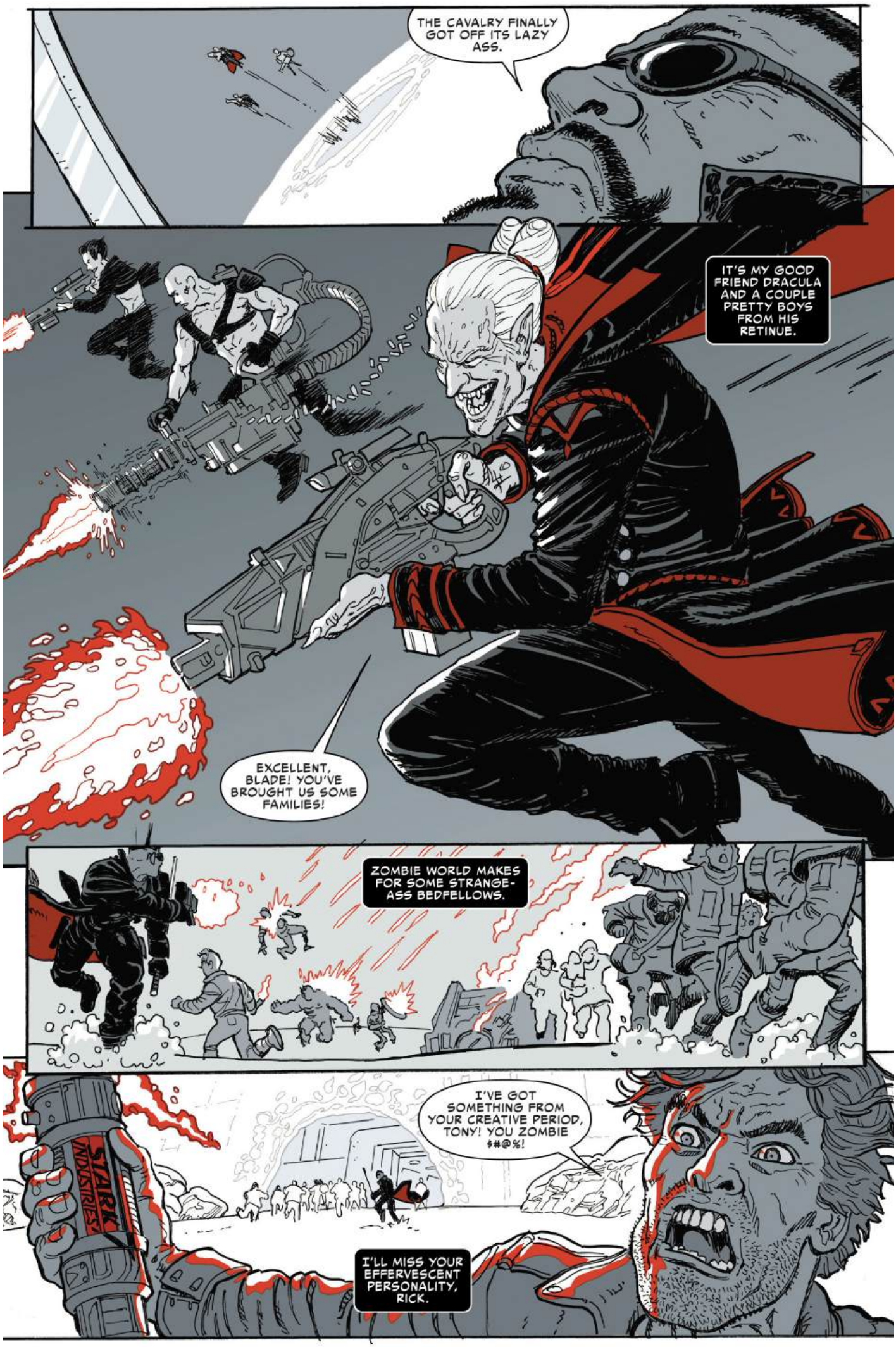
I AIN'T BEIN' FAIR--HE'S NOT HIMSELF.
NONE OF THEM ARE OR WILL BE AGAIN. SO MAYBE I GOT A SHOT.
HUUNGHRLKKK--
RIGHT COMBO OF BITERS CAN TAKE DOWN ANYBODY. I AIN'T HEARD ABOUT ANY OTHER LIVIN' HEROES ANYWHERE. AIN'T NO WORK BEIN' DONE OUT THERE EXCEPT BY ME AND MY GUY.
COULD I BE THE LAST ONE FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT?
I RELEASE YOU, BROTHERS AND SISTERS.
BRRRP BRRRA BRRR
THUNK!
THUNK!
I WAS NEVER REALLY A PART OF THE SO-CALLED HERO COMMUNITY. THOSE GUYS WERE SELF-ELECTED INSPIRATIONAL FIGURES OR SOME CRAP.
SPKT!
SPKT!
ME? I'M AN EXTERMINATOR. ERADICATING THE FILTH THAT IS THE VAMPIRE INFECTION IS MY PURPOSE... IT WAS, ANYWAY.
SPKT!
SPAK!
I MISS THOSE COLORFUL BLOWHARDS NOW, THOUGH. IF I HEARD BEN GRIMM SAY THAT CORNY "IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!" BATTLE CRY AGAIN, I'D PROLLY WEEP.
GRAH-RAHRRR--
SPAK!
SPAK!
SPKT!

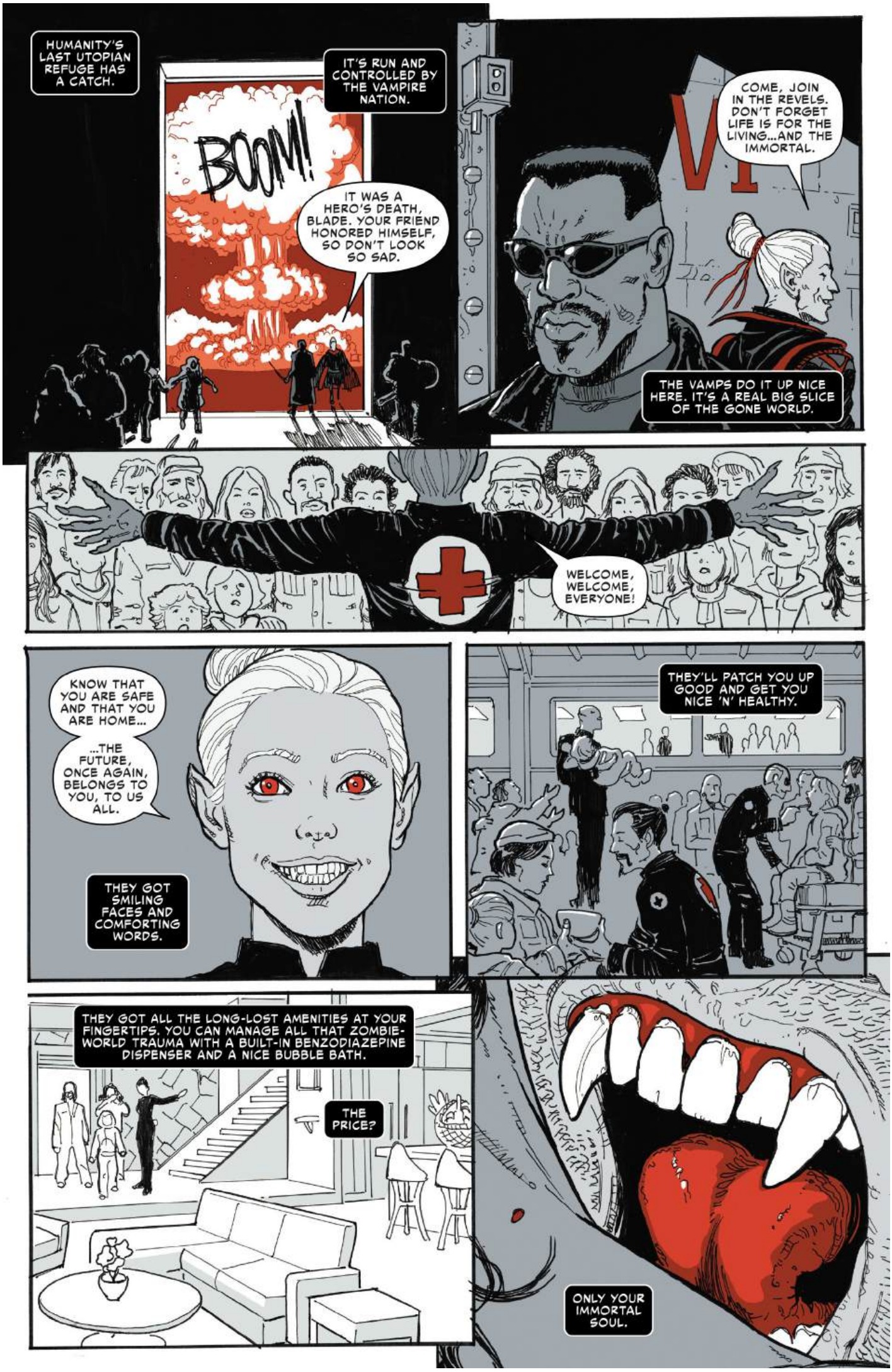

GRAAAA--
IT'S DIRT-NAP TIME!
HURGH!
THE ICEMAN...
...GOETH.
GUH?!
DON'T JUDGE THE QUIPS.
WOK!
I GET MY MORALE WHERE I CAN THESE DAYS.
UHN!
PING
GLAAA RHAA RHUUU--

WELL, WELL. THE EARTH'S MIGHTIEST BRAIN MUNCHERS HAVE ASSEMBLED TO RUIN THE DAY. THEY STILL LOOK A BIT TOO SPRY FOR MY LIKING.
THEY ARE DRAWN HERE FOR ONE REASON: FRESH MEAT. IT'S A DWINDLING COMMODITY IN THE ZOM WORLD, AND THIS PLACE IS NUTHIN' BUT TOP-SHELF ZOMBIE NOM NOMS.
IT'S THE LAST SAFE PLACE WHERE HUMANITY CAN FLOURISH ONCE MORE.
GGLLEYAAAGH.
THEY CALL IT THE *SANCTUARY*, AND NOTHING CAN GET THROUGH ITS FORCE-FIELDS, NOT EVEN THESE SUPER-GUTS-GOBBLERS.
THE WHOLE PLACE IS SELF-SUFFICIENT EXCEPT FOR ONE THING...FOOD FOR ITS RULING CLASS.

RAT-AT-AT-AT-AT-AT-AT-
PANG!
PANG!
THAT'S WHERE ME AND MY CRAZY SIDEKICK COME IN. WE PROVIDE SEED FOR THE FOREVER-HUNGERING SOIL.
DIE, YOU SUPER-ZOMBIE $#@%S!
YOU RUINED MY LIFE!
RICK JONES HAS SEEN IT ALL. PROBABLY TOO MUCH. DEFINITELY TOO MUCH.
HE COULD IMPROVE HIS BEDSIDE MANNER WITH OUR PRECIOUS CARGO, BUT MAYBE THAT'S ASKIN' TOO MUCH. HE AIN'T WHAT HE USED TO BE, BUT WHO IS?
$#@%!
HE'S MY FIRST REAL SIDEKICK, AND I'M ABOUT HIS SLOPPY NINETEENTHS, HERO-WISE.
C'MON, C'MON, WE AIN'T COME THIS FAR FOR NUTHIN'!

(GRAA LARRARR--)*
TZZZAK!
*TRANSLATED FROM ZOMBIE FOR "CLASSIC TONY QUIP."
WWWWW
$#@%! LOSING CONTROL!
THIS RUN IS GOING SIDEWAYS...
IT'S THE END OF THE LINE.
GO! GO!
NOT GONNA ENJOY SEEIN' RICK GET EATEN ALIVE BY HIS OLD BUDDIES. THAT $#@% AIN'T RIGHT.


THE CAVALRY FINALLY GOT OFF ITS LAZY ASS.
IT'S MY GOOD FRIEND DRACULA AND A COUPLE PRETTY BOYS FROM HIS RETINUE.
EXCELLENT, BLADE! YOU'VE BROUGHT US SOME FAMILIES!
ZOMBIE WORLD MAKES FOR SOME STRANGE-ASS BEDFELLOWS.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING FROM YOUR CREATIVE PERIOD, TONY! YOU ZOMBIE $#@%!
I'LL MISS YOUR EFFERVESCENT PERSONALITY, RICK.
STARK INDUSTRIES


HUMANITY'S LAST UTOPIAN REFUGE HAS A CATCH.
IT'S RUN AND CONTROLLED BY THE VAMPIRE NATION.
BOOM!
IT WAS A HERO'S DEATH, BLADE. YOUR FRIEND HONORED HIMSELF, SO DON'T LOOK SO SAD.
COME, JOIN IN THE REVELS. DON'T FORGET LIFE IS FOR THE LIVING...AND THE IMMORTAL.
THE VAMPS DO IT UP NICE HERE. IT'S A REAL BIG SLICE OF THE GONE WORLD.
WELCOME, WELCOME, EVERYONE!
KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAFE AND THAT YOU ARE HOME...
...THE FUTURE, ONCE AGAIN, BELONGS TO YOU, TO US ALL.
THEY GOT SMILING FACES AND COMFORTING WORDS.
THEY'LL PATCH YOU UP GOOD AND GET YOU NICE 'N' HEALTHY.
THEY GOT ALL THE LONG-LOST AMENITIES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS. YOU CAN MANAGE ALL THAT ZOMBIE-WORLD TRAUMA WITH A BUILT-IN BENZODIAZEPINE DISPENSER AND A NICE BUBBLE BATH.
THE PRICE?
ONLY YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL.

THEIR PROTECTION IS CONTINGENT UPON YOU BECOMING THEIR BLOOD COW FOR LIFE. HUMANITY IS BEING SAVED TO BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN PAMPERED SLAVES.
I HATE IT, AND I HELP ENABLE ALL OF IT. I JUST DON'T SEE ANY OTHER WAY.
SO I MUST SULLY MYSELF FOR THE GREATER GOOD. I MUST SURVIVE AND BE PATIENT.
DON'T EVER CHANGE, BLADE!
HAHAHA HA--
BECAUSE ONE DAY, THE ZOMBIE MENACE WILL BE EXTINGUISHED, AND THE ROSE OF HUMANKIND WILL BLOOM ONCE MORE. THEN...
THEN, I'M GOING TO KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF THESE BLOODSUCKIN', %$@#&$#@%&# VAMPIRES IN THIS RATHOLE.
CHEERS.
THE END.

WAR IS WAR.
LAST MAN STANDING
THE ENEMIES MAY CHANGE...
...BUT THE KILLING STAYS THE SAME.
AND IF THERE'S ONE THING I'M GOOD AT...

...IT'S KILLING.
SNICK
EVEN IF THE CURRENT ENEMY IS...ALREADY DEAD.
BUT THIS WAR WAS LOST BEFORE IT EVER BEGAN.
THE ONLY THING THAT SPREAD FASTER THAN THE ZOMBIE VIRUS WAS THE RUMORS ABOUT IT.
REPORTS BLAMED RUSSIA, CHINA...EVEN OUTER SPACE.

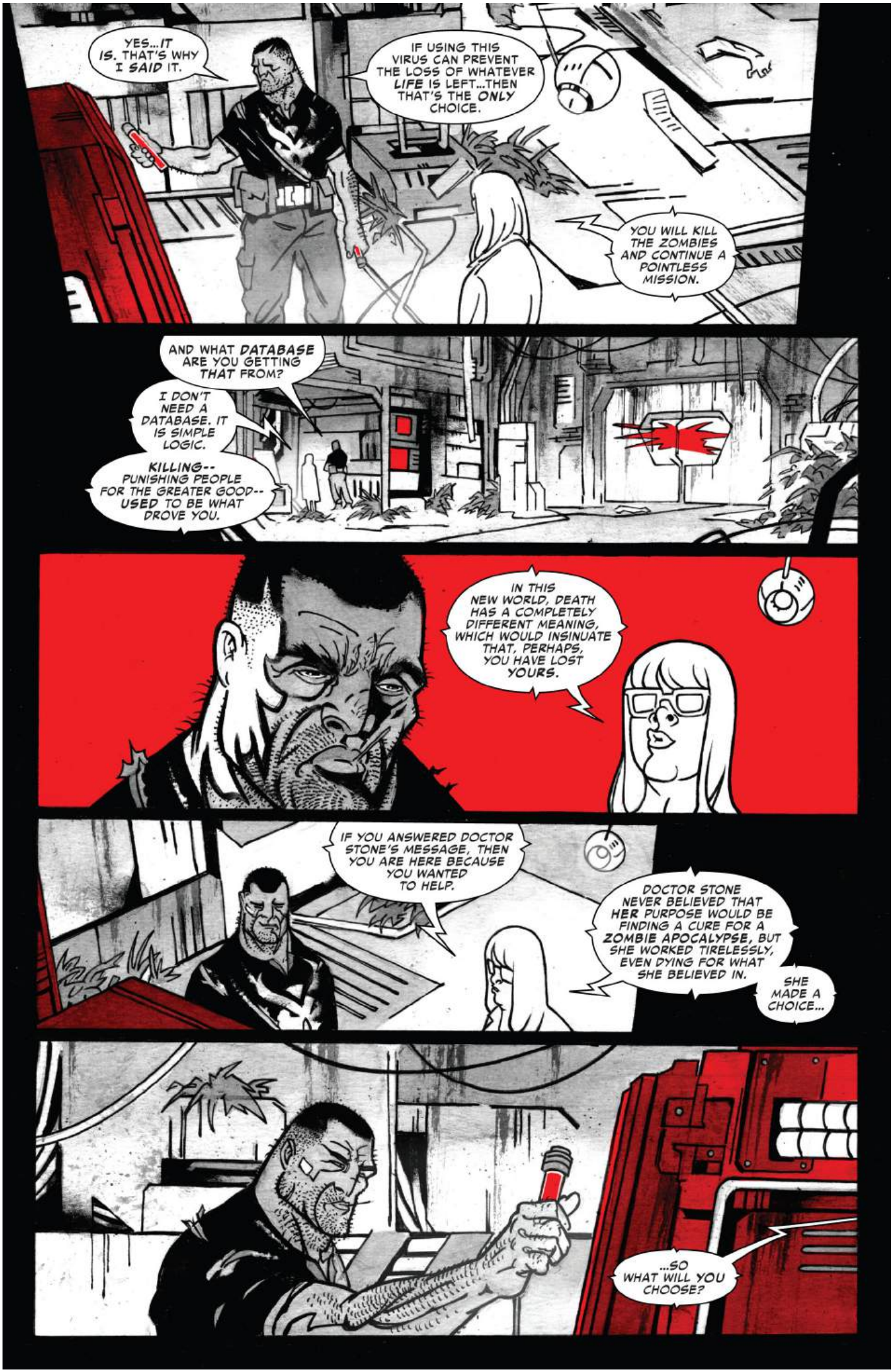
IN THE END, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO OR WHAT CAUSED IT...
HRSSSSS!
...BECAUSE NO ONE STOOD A CHANCE.
HRRRRGN!
&%#@.
DEET DEET
COME ON, YOU PIECE OF #@&%...COME ON...
#%@.
HRRRRGN!
DEEEEET
KRAK
DEET
THERE WERE, OF COURSE, SOME WHO TRIED TO GIVE HUMANKIND A FIGHTING CHANCE...

...TALK OF A CURE OR A VACCINE...HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.
BUT IT WAS JUST THAT.
TALK.
ARGHN!
DEET
SCHLK
OR SO I THOUGHT.
HRN.
WELCOME...

...AUTHORIZATION CODE REQUIRED OR SELF-DEFENSE MEASURES WILL BE ACTI--
I'M HERE FOR DOCTOR STONE.
YOU'RE HUMAN.
SURE AM.
LOT OF GOOD THAT DOES...
...HUMAN IN A WORLD FULL OF MONSTERS.
AN IDENTITY CRISIS IS DEFINED AS A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION IN WHICH A PERSON'S SENSE OF SELF BECOMES INSECURE.
IF THERE'S NO ONE LEFT TO PUNISH, ARE YOU STILL THE PUNISHER, FRANK CASTLE?
YOU KNOW MY NAME. HOW--?

I'M AN ARTIFICIAL RE-CREATION OF DOCTOR MIRIAM STONE. I HAVE ALL OF HER MEMORIES AND ELEMENTS OF HER PERSONALITY, PLUS THE ABILITY TO SCAN THOUSANDS OF DATABASES' WORTH OF KNOWLEDGE FASTER THAN YOU CAN BLINK.
FRANK CASTLE, A.K.A. THE PUNISHER, IS A STREET-LEVEL VIGILANTE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF MANY CRIMINALS LINKED TO VIOLENT--
OKAY, I GET IT.
WHERE'S DOCTOR STONE... THE REAL ONE?
DOCTOR MIRIAM STONE DIED TWO YEARS AND TWENTY-EIGHT DAYS AGO.
THEN I CAME HERE FOR NOTHING?
YOU RECEIVED THE TRANSMISSION, DIDN'T YOU?
DOCTOR STONE MAY NO LONGER BE WITH US...
...BUT HER RESEARCH IS.
YOU'RE TELLING ME IT'S REAL?

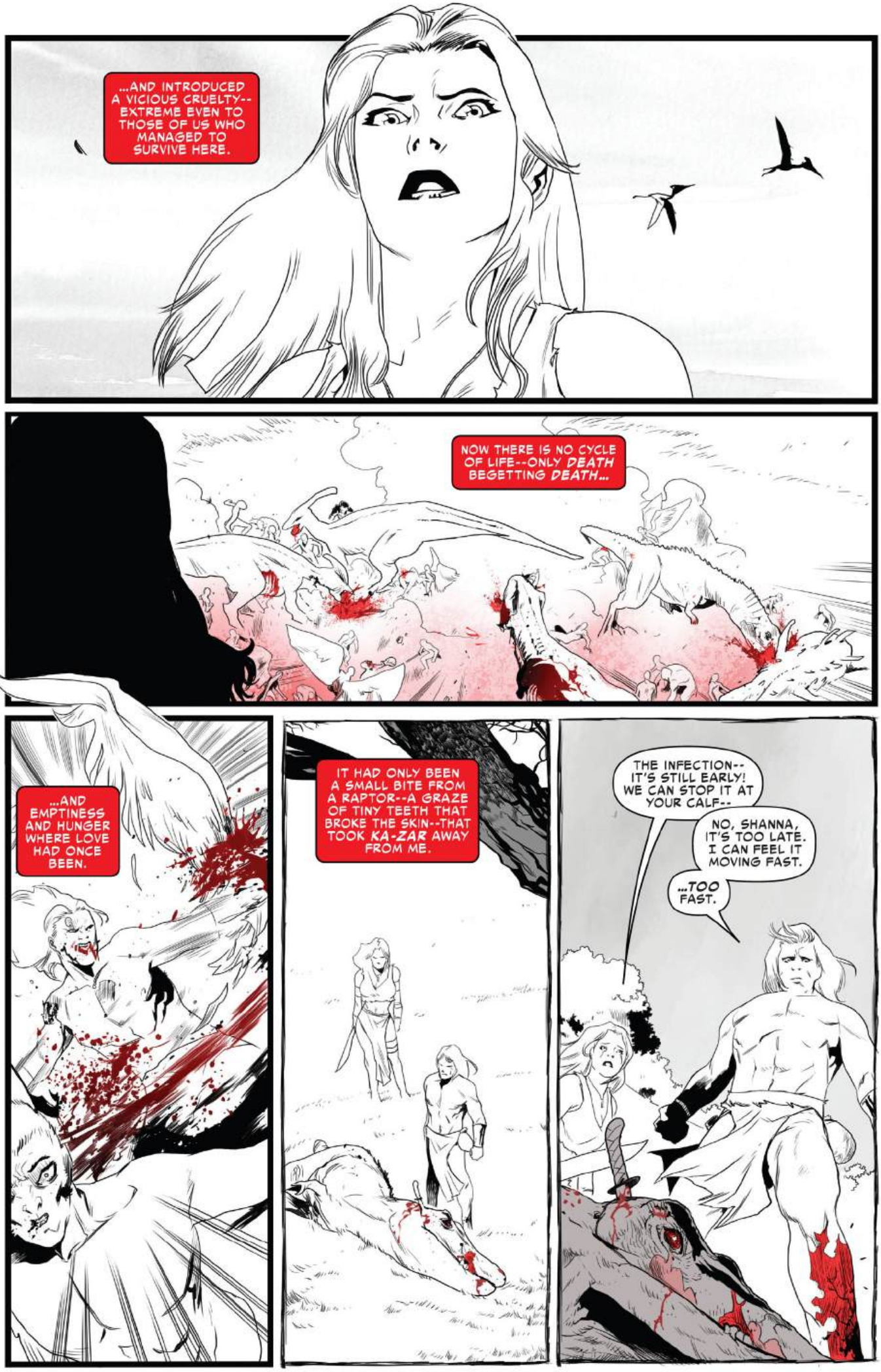
DOCTOR STONE'S MESSAGE SAID SHE FOUND A WAY TO FIX IT...TO GET RID OF THOSE MONSTERS FOR GOOD.
YES, DOCTOR STONE SUCCEEDED IN CREATING A VIRUS THAT COULD SPREAD THROUGH THE ENTIRE POPULATION, KILLING ALL OF THE UNDEAD...
...BUT SHE ALSO CREATED A CURE.
A CURE? YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE TRIED THAT?
AND YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT IT'S JUST SITTING RIGHT HERE...IN THAT VIAL?
IT WAS TESTED ON A VERY SMALL SAMPLE SIZE BEFORE THE LAB WAS COMPROMISED. BUT THE TESTS WERE OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE.
I'LL PLAY ALONG FOR A MOMENT.
SO, ASSUMING THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING ISN'T COMPLETE AND UTTER @#%&--WHICH IT ABSOLUTELY IS--THEN THERE ARE TWO OPTIONS...
...SPREAD A VIRUS CREATED SPECIFICALLY TO WIPE OUT THE DAMNED ZOMBIES, OR TAKE A CHANCE ON A CURE WITH NO MORE EVIDENCE THAN AN ARTIFICIAL RE-CREATION OF DOCTOR MIRIAM STONE TELLING ME IT'S GOOD.
I THINK I'LL KILL 'EM.
OF COURSE. THAT IS WHAT YOU WOULD DO, PUNISHER.


YES...IT IS. THAT'S WHY I SAID IT.
IF USING THIS VIRUS CAN PREVENT THE LOSS OF WHATEVER LIFE IS LEFT...THEN THAT'S THE ONLY CHOICE.
YOU WILL KILL THE ZOMBIES AND CONTINUE A POINTLESS MISSION.
AND WHAT DATABASE ARE YOU GETTING THAT FROM?
I DON'T NEED A DATABASE. IT IS SIMPLE LOGIC.
KILLING-- PUNISHING PEOPLE FOR THE GREATER GOOD-- USED TO BE WHAT DROVE YOU.
IN THIS NEW WORLD, DEATH HAS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MEANING, WHICH WOULD INSINUATE THAT, PERHAPS, YOU HAVE LOST YOURS.
IF YOU ANSWERED DOCTOR STONE'S MESSAGE, THEN YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO HELP.
DOCTOR STONE NEVER BELIEVED THAT HER PURPOSE WOULD BE FINDING A CURE FOR A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE, BUT SHE WORKED TIRELESSLY, EVEN DYING FOR WHAT SHE BELIEVED IN.
SHE MADE A CHOICE...
...SO WHAT WILL YOU CHOOSE?

SHE REALLY THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE...THAT THERE WERE STILL *PEOPLE* WHO COULD BE SAVED?
KRAAAAK
YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.
I WON'T MAKE IT.
DOCTOR STONE'S WORK NEEDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED--
I KNOW.
NO. YOU CAN'T.
IT'S THE FASTEST WAY. BESIDES, IT'S BETTER THAN CONTINUING A *POINTLESS* MISSION.
THIS WAR WAS LOST BEFORE IT EVER BEGAN...
HRRRRRGN!

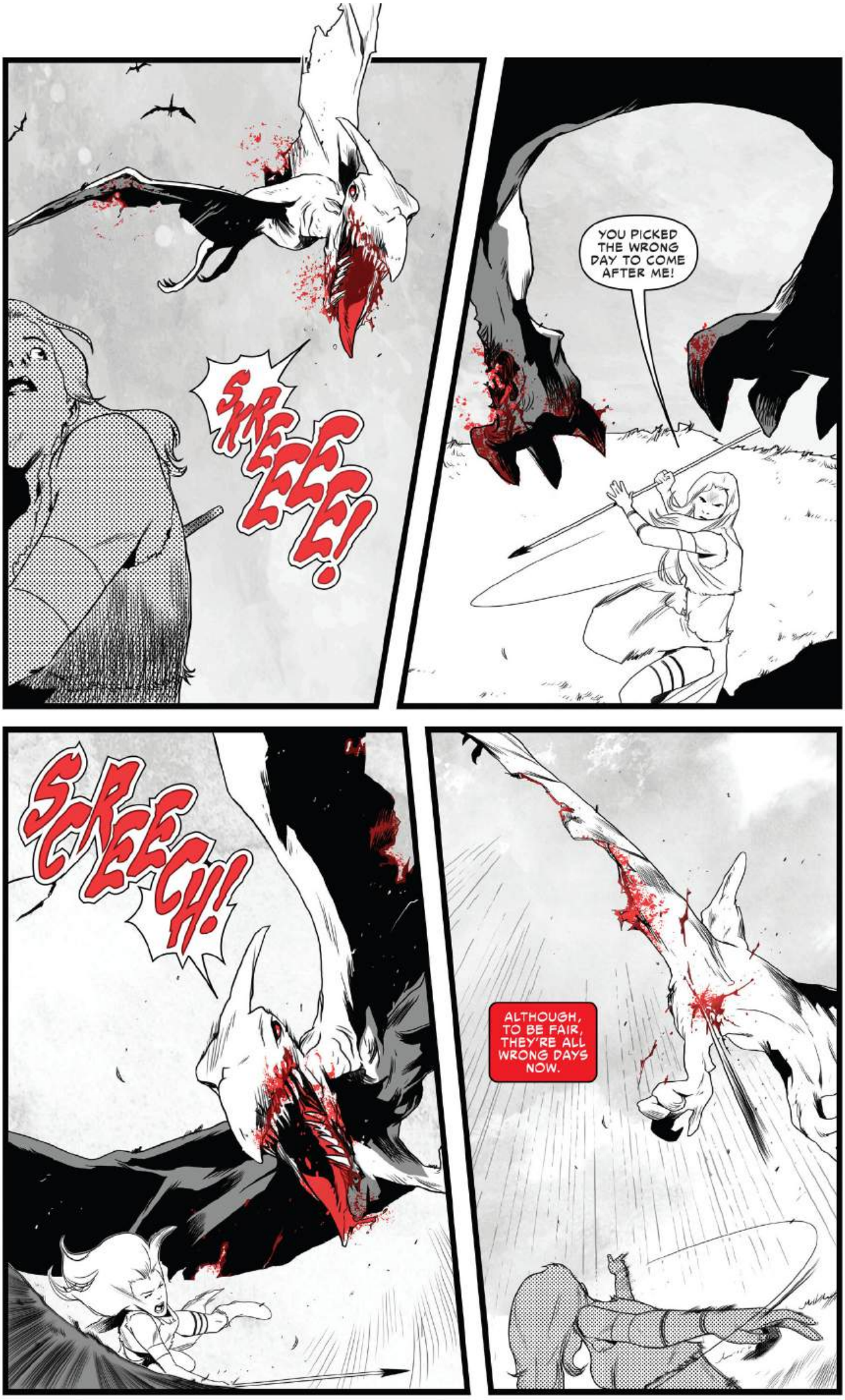
...BUT I AM A SOLDIER.
HRRRERAGH!
MAYBE I'M THE LAST CASUALTY IN THE LAST WAR.
OR MAYBE I'M THE SACRIFICE THAT FINALLY WINS IT.
GOODBYE, FRANK.
THE END.

"SHANNA OF THE DEAD"
IT TOOK ONLY THREE MONTHS FOR THE ZOMBIE VIRUS THAT QUICKSILVER BROUGHT TO THE SAVAGE LAND TO SPREAD.
ITS MINDLESS VIOLENCE AND CARNAGE INFESTED EVERY DARK JUNGLE CORNER, EVERY ISLAND, EVERY MIST-SHROUDED MOUNTAINTOP...


...AND INTRODUCED A VICIOUS CRUELTY--EXTREME EVEN TO THOSE OF US WHO MANAGED TO SURVIVE HERE.
NOW THERE IS NO CYCLE OF LIFE--ONLY DEATH BEGETTING DEATH...
...AND EMPTINESS AND HUNGER WHERE LOVE HAD ONCE BEEN.
IT HAD ONLY BEEN A SMALL BITE FROM A RAPTOR--A GRAZE OF TINY TEETH THAT BROKE THE SKIN--THAT TOOK KA-ZAR AWAY FROM ME.
THE INFECTION--IT'S STILL EARLY! WE CAN STOP IT AT YOUR CALF--
NO, SHANNA, IT'S TOO LATE. I CAN FEEL IT MOVING FAST.
...TOO FAST.

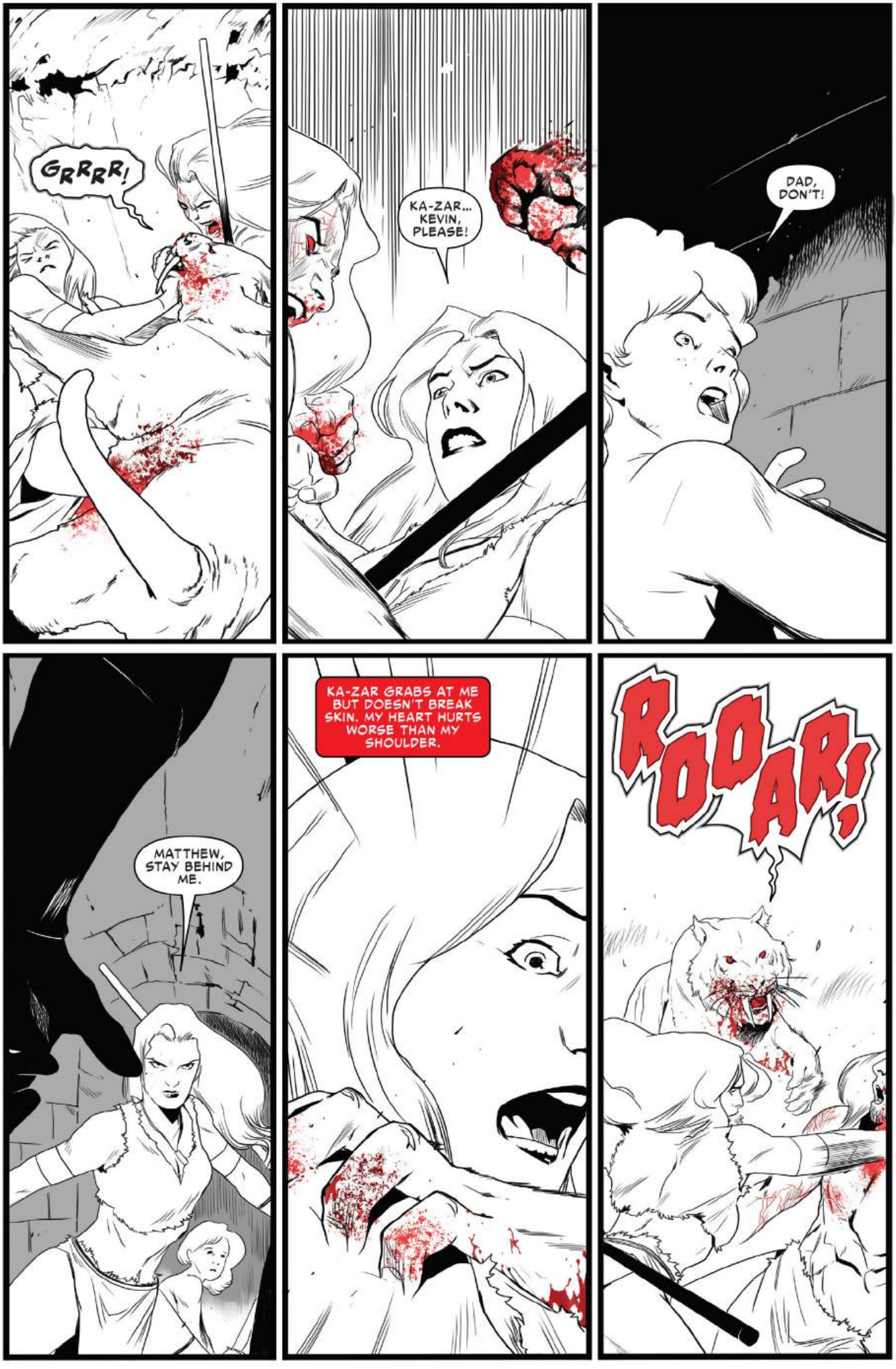
THE INFECTION SPREAD SWIFTLY.
GET OUT OF HERE! NOW! AND TAKE ZABU WITH YOU--TAKE CARE OF HIM!
I--I CAN'T LEAVE YOU! I WON'T!
YOU HAVE TO! GO, SHANNA!
SHANNA, OUR SON! YOU NEED... YOU NEED TO PROTECT MATTHEW NOW... YOU HAVE TO GO--
KEVIN, NO...
...BEFORE I...BEFORE I...
I JUST BARELY MADE IT BACK TO THE LAST REDOUBT, A MOUNTAINTOP FORTRESS PROTECTING THE FEW REMAINING UNINFECTED.
SIG! GET READY TO CLOSE THE GATE BEHIND ME!
WHERE'S KA-ZAR?
YOU SHOULD HAVE LET ME END IT, OLD FRIEND.
+GROWL+
BUT ZABU WOULDN'T FOLLOW ME. HE REMAINED LOYAL TO KA-ZAR TO THE LAST...
...AND EVEN AFTER.

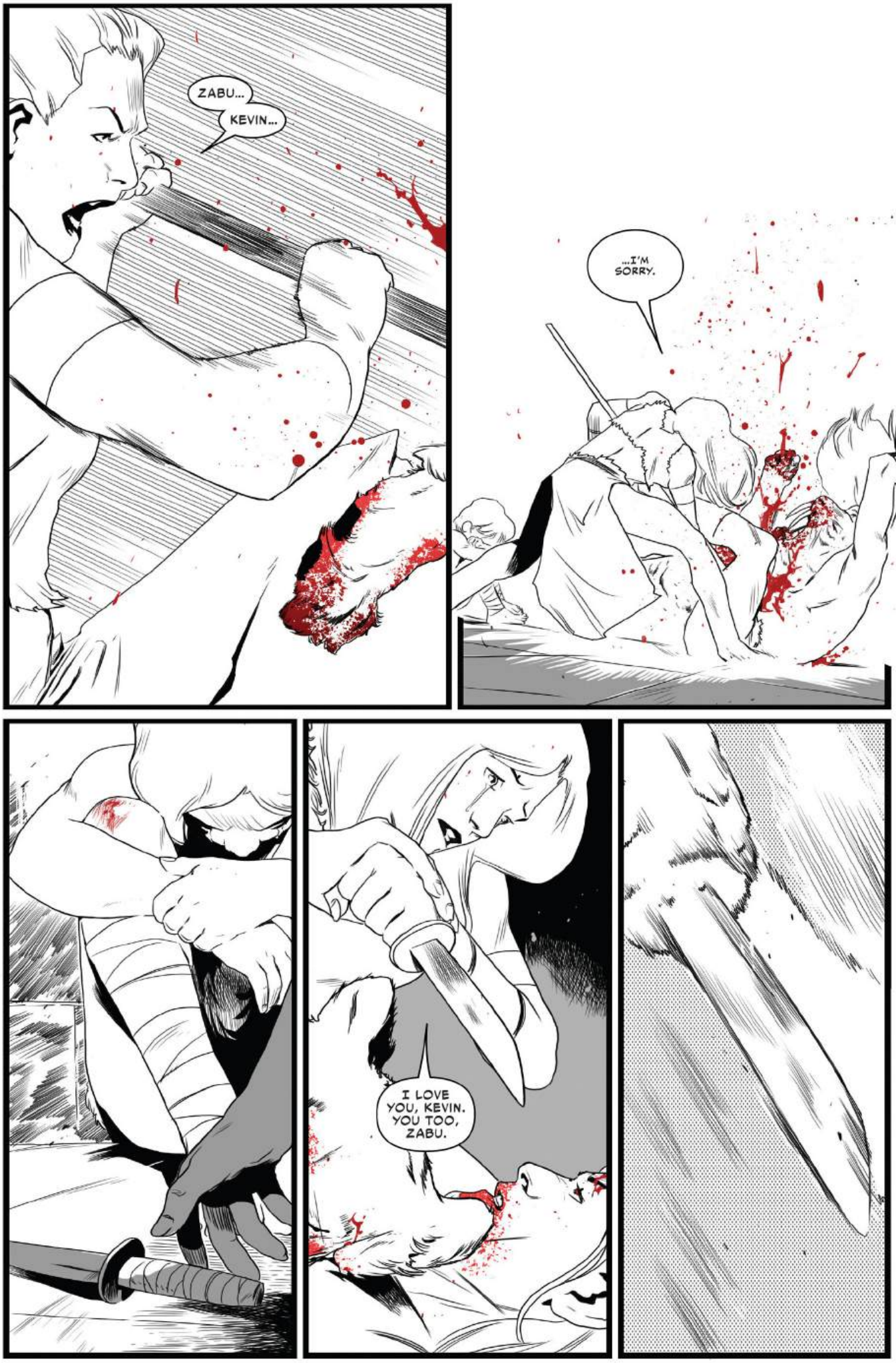
IT HAD TAKEN SO LONG TO GET KA-ZAR TO SEE THAT LIFE COULD BE SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST SURVIVING, SO MUCH MORE THAN BIRTH AND DEATH, BUT ALL THE WORTHWHILE MOMENTS IN BETWEEN.
THIS ISN'T LIFE. IT ISN'T EVEN SURVIVAL.
I KNOW THAT EVEN IN THIS LIVING DEATH, KA-ZAR AND ZABU ARE LINKED, AND TO TAKE DOWN ONE, I WILL HAVE TO TAKE DOWN BOTH.
COME ON...
DAMMIT.


SKREEE!
YOU PICKED THE WRONG DAY TO COME AFTER ME!
SCREECH!
ALTHOUGH, TO BE FAIR, THEY'RE ALL WRONG DAYS NOW.

HRRRRGN!
GRAAAA--
LORD ZYR, LOOK! THEY'VE BROKEN THROUGH!
SOUND THE ALARMS! SOLDIERS, TO BATTLE! SIG, GO HELP LADY SHANNA!
MATTHEW! I'VE GOT TO GET TO HIM!
MATTHEW, WHERE'S YOUR MOTHER?
THE AERIANS TAKE TO THE SKY TO PROTECT THE FORTRESS... AND MATTHEW.

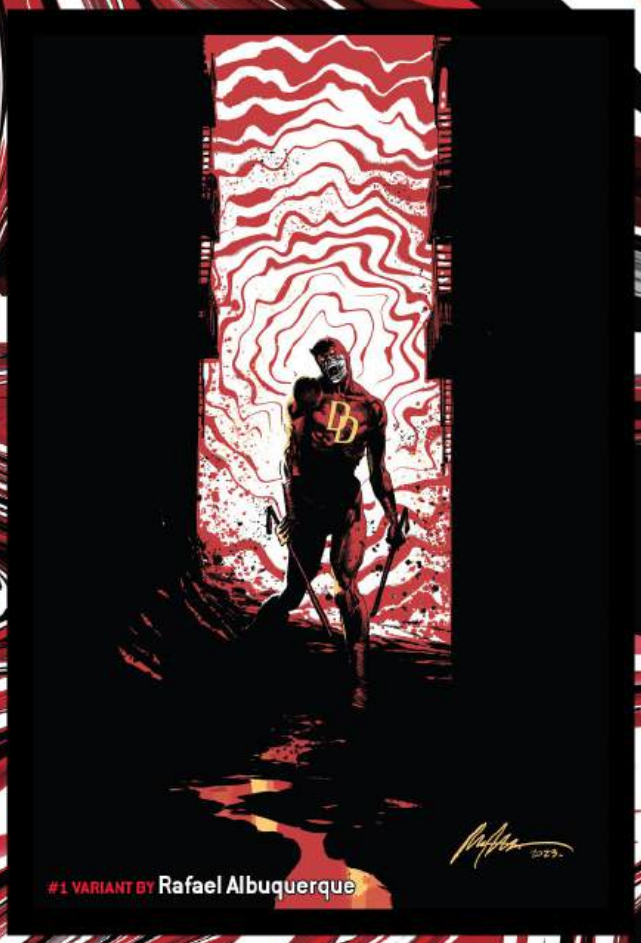
DEATH TO THE DEAD!
THE DAY HAD COME...
HRRRRGN!
...WHEN THE HUNGER OF THE DEAD COULD NO LONGER BE KEPT AT BAY.
DAD...?
MATTHEW! I'M COMING!


GRRRR!
KA-ZAR... KEVIN, PLEASE!
DAD, DON'T!
MATTHEW, STAY BEHIND ME.
KA-ZAR GRABS AT ME BUT DOESN'T BREAK SKIN. MY HEART HURTS WORSE THAN MY SHOULDER.
ROOAR!


ZABU...
KEVIN...
...I'M SORRY.
I LOVE YOU, KEVIN. YOU TOO, ZABU.

"...REST NOW."
MOM...WILL DAD AND ZABU BE OKAY NOW? DID THE ZOMBIE STUFF INSIDE THEM GO AWAY?
OH, MY SON.
MOM, I'M SCARED...
IT'S TIME TO GO, MATTHEW. I NEED TO GET YOU SOMEPLACE SAFE.
MATTHEW...?
END.

#1 VARIANT BY Leinil Francis Yu & Sunny Gho



#1 VARIANT BY Rafael Albuquerque

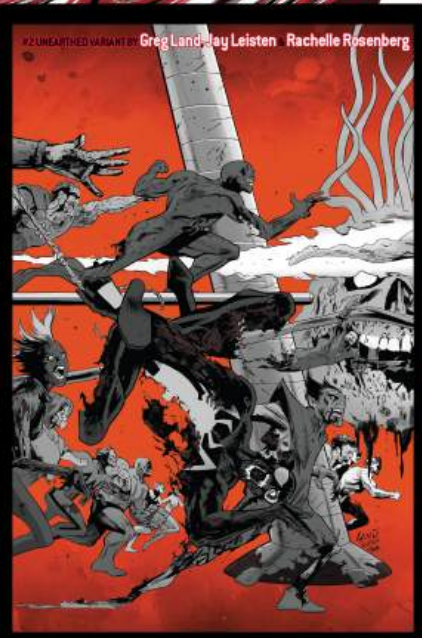
#1 HOMAGE VARIANT BY Carlos Magno & Chris Sotomayor

#1 UNEARTHED VARIANT BY Mike Deodato Jr. & Rachelle Rosenberg

#2 VARIANT BY Lucio Parrillo

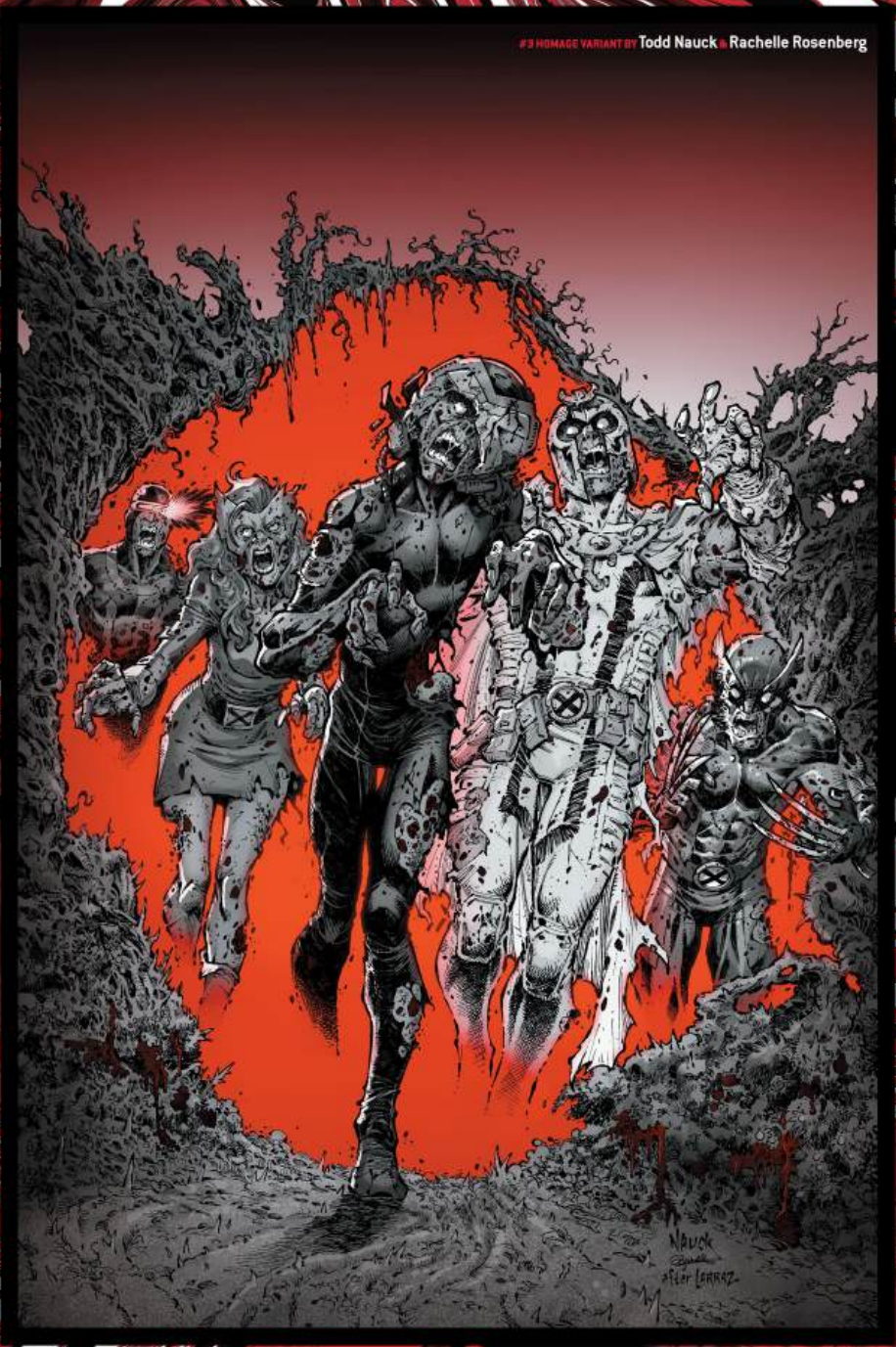
#2 HOMAGE VARIANT BY Cory Smith & Alex Sinclair

#2 UNEARTHED VARIANT BY Greg Land & Jay Leisten & Rachelle Rosenberg



#3 VARIANT BY Alex Horley

#3 HOMAGE VARIANT BY Todd Nauck & Rachelle Rosenberg



#3 UNEARTHED VARIANT BY Ed McGuinness & Rachelle Rosenberg

#4 VARIANT BY Joshua Cassara

#4 HOMAGE VARIANT BY Todd Nauck & Rachelle Rosenberg
Nauck
after
TEDESCO

KAMIC RIDER
MARIKA